

# Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial Comments

**DIGBY JACKS**

## **HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

Joint Programme for Government of French Communist  
and Socialist Parties (Extracts).

**LOUIS ALTHUSSER**

## **REPLY TO JOHN LEWIS (SELF CRITICISM)**

**PART 1**

*Discussion*

**BERT RAMELSON**

Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

# MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Volume 16, Number 10

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# Editorial Comments

THE shock of Labour's defeat in 1970 caused many Labour people most furiously to think about the reason why. One of the fruits of this thought is a book<sup>1</sup> which in its way, is somewhat remarkable. Written, edited and published by Fabians, it is a pretty devastating attack on the records of the 1964-1970 Labour Governments.

The authors write more in sorrow than in anger. For they are, after all, Fabians not Marxists. All of them, however, believe that Labour Governments should have made something like a difference to the economic and social order in Britain, to the distribution of wealth, to opportunities for the mass of the people, to inequality. Nearly all ask the question "who in fact benefited?". And practically all come up with the same answer—the rich, the middle class, certainly not the poor, or the great mass of the people.

Their conclusions, in the sixteen different essays by different authors covering the social services, housing, health, social security, education, wealth distribution, taxation and fiscal policy, are summed up by what is said in the Introduction:

"In many ways this is a critical book. While noting the achievements, most of the writers have failed to find evidence of marked changes in fulfilling socialist objectives. Their analyses present a gloomy picture. They confirm the inability of the Government to use its power on behalf of the weaker members of the community".

This is confirmed again and again. Thus on the social services it is said under the Labour Government "there was a rapidly growing conflict between providing social services for the poor and providing them for the middle classes" and "social spending for the affluent rose at a very rapid rate" (p.81).

"In brief, the main beneficiaries of the education explosion in the 1960's have been to the middle class" (p.102) . . . "the first socialist education act still seems a long way off" (p.108).

On the rich and poor, Michael Meacher, whose essay is aptly entitled "Wealth—

Labour's Achilles Heel", shows with a wealth of statistics that the richest 5 per cent still continued to thrive under Wilson and to own the greater part of the nation's wealth":

"Overall . . . no decisive shift in emphasis towards capital taxation is apparent . . . it is manifest that inequalities of ownership have not been seriously impugned" (p. 198).

The editors sadly conclude that "Democratic Socialism did not fail in the 1960's, it was not tried" (p.11). But in fact Wilson's Government acted in precisely the same way as all other Governments led by self-styled "Democratic Socialists" imbued with Fabian ideas about the "mixed economy", "managed capitalism", etc.

This book, however, is a sign of the growing dissatisfaction and disillusion with the policies and leadership of the Right Wing leaders. It expresses the need and the possibilities of unity between all the left forces in the Labour movement—including the Communists—to end the domination of the right wing and pave the way for the return of a Labour Government with genuine socialist policies.

## THE UGANDAN ASIANS

As we go to press (10 September) the expulsion of Ugandan Asians holding British passports and the threat to all Asians living there, has aroused universal condemnation.

The British Government has been reluctantly forced to accept those holding British passports. The attempt to implement this decision is being used by Enoch Powell, the National Front and other reactionary forces to try to develop a raging, white racist backlash.

They are using popular discontent and anxiety about inadequate housing, growing unemployment and miserable social services as arguments with which to stoke up their campaign to keep the Ugandan Asians out. Unfortunately they are having some success.

All progressives must be to the forefront in helping those who have been driven here by Amin, to find places to settle. Keeping them out will not solve a single one of the problems facing British workers. The fight

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<sup>1</sup> *Labour and Inequality—Sixteen Fabian Essays*, edited by Peter Townsend and Nicholas Bosanquet, Fabian Society, £3.80 hardback, £2.20 paperback.

for better jobs, houses, social services, must not be allowed to be diverted into racialist channels, nor must we allow neo-Mosleyism to use these issues to make a "come back".

What is behind it all? Amin seems to be trying to combine a number of aims. First to divert popular attention from the catastrophic economic situation which he and his régime have brought about especially by the huge increase in military expenditure. Second, to secure popularity as the alleged architect of "Africanisation" in Uganda. Thirdly, to try to assist the development of the indigenous Ugandan bourgeoisie by eliminating their rivals at one stroke and practically without cost.

All these aims are camouflaged by the most odious, brutal demagoguery and behaviour.

Genuine attempts at "Africanization" would be part and parcel of a consistent policy of struggle against Imperialism.

But Amin's record is the very reverse of this. He came to power with the active support of Western Imperialism. He halted the first timid steps taken by the President he overthrew—Milton Obote—towards the development of Ugandan control of industry and opened the doors of Uganda more widely to penetration by foreign monopolies than ever before.

He initiated a number of aggressive frontier provocations against one of the most uncompromising anti-Imperialist states in Africa—his neighbour Tanzania. He was even preparing for war against it. He desired to annex Tanga from Tanzania to provide land-locked Uganda with an outlet to the sea.

He ignored decisions of the Organisation of African Unity, opened a "dialogue" with the racist Vorster régime in South Africa and advocated the sale of arms to that country by Great Britain.

All this demonstrates the real nature of Amin's régime and shows that his motives with regard to the Uganda Asians have nothing to do with the fight against imperialism.

#### NIMERY AND NEO-COLONIALISM

It is, perhaps, indicative of the present situation in the Sudan that President Nimery should have chosen the opportunity of a special meeting with businessmen in Omdurman at the beginning of August to announce his proposals for strengthening the private sector of the economy.

The decisions he announced, and his attitude towards the businessmen gathered

at the meeting at Al Khalifah Mosque, show quite clearly how fast the regime under Nimery is moving away from the programme of the May 1969 revolution. Certainly his sycophantic flattery of the businessmen stands in marked contrast to the slanderous remarks he made at the same meeting against the heroic Communists of the Sudan.

Declaring, as dictators often do, "God has put me in this place to lead this nation", Nimery went on to state that some parts of the public sector of the economy "may become a private sector overnight. . . . (The) public sector leads the economy but the private sector is the one that builds the country." He said that while the public sector in the Sudan must continue to be responsible for certain aspects, including communications, various forms of transport, hospitals, schools and irrigation, (and he added that this was essential because "these issues are very sensitive for the masses"), there were, however, some aspects of the economy "in which the public sector should not involve itself", and therefore committees had been set up in order to consider "the possible reinstatement of some activities of the public sector back to the private sector."

He referred to "small enterprises" which he thought should not belong to the public sector; but these "small enterprises" included those of £150,000 to £300,000—in Sudanese terms not exactly small.

Significantly, too, he announced that he has now made an agreement with an Anglo-American firm to set up in the Sudan an Investment Corporation with a capital of 600 million dollars. Another agreement with a British firm will provide for a big increase in sugar production, with a goal of 1 million tons in eight years' time. Further, a joint investment company has been established with Kuwait, one of the most reactionary Arab states, closely linked with the United States. Kuwait will provide 7 million dollars to help build six international airports.

Private factories will also be encouraged, including textile factories to be set up by a leading Sudanese businessman, Dr. Khalid, and others to be established by El Sayed Gatah El Rahman and his group.

Warning the businessmen not to send their sons to Eastern Europe, Nimery linked his destiny to the private sector, declaring: "As long as you stand behind me, I will go along this road. If you raise your hands and tell me to stop here, I will stop and consider."

## COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY OF LONDON 1972

Well over 200 participants—students and tutors—survived nine days of intensive and extensive discussion, argument and analysis, showed varying degrees of tolerance of the daily organisational problems, continued their seminars in coffee-bars, canteens and pubs, and contributed in a small way to the struggle to free the imprisoned dockers.

A large number of those taking part were not Communist Party members—up to 40 per cent, according to some estimates—and many of the participants refused to stay with one course, preferring to move from subject to subject according to their interests.

The obvious difficulty in every course was that participants' knowledge and experience varied greatly, so that discussion easily became too specific or too general for some of those involved. This difficulty was recognised at the planning stage, and an attempt was made to overcome it by including sessions on basic Marxism in each course; such sessions may have lessened the problem, but it did not solve it.

The tendency for participants to move from course to course indicates the inadequacies of a programme of study carefully cut into sections called "Sociology", "Economics", "Philosophy", in accordance with bourgeois educational concepts. Whilst the need to develop critiques in existing disciplines is obvious, there is also a case for Marxist alternatives which break with current categories and approaches.

New organisational expressions of the type of activity represented by the successive Communist Universities are beginning to develop. Groups in Economics, Philosophy and Sociology are being organised, and existing activity in the fields of the Sciences, Art and History will it is hoped, be strengthened as a direct consequence of this summer's event. As these groups expand they will materially effect the content and form of future Communist Universities, both re-defining their role and overcoming the considerable organisational problems that face us at present.

Meanwhile the first steps are already being taken to prepare the 1973 Communist University which will be held from July 21-29 next year.

## GLYNCORRWG—WELSH MINERS' MUSEUM

Some museums, however precious their

contents, are little more than collections, glorified filing cabinets of the products of the past. But a museum can be a thing in which love and learning are mingled, and which in its presentation of the past can help to light up the future.

This is the thought that seems to have moved those who recently put forward the idea of using the buildings of the former Glyncoerrwg Colliery in South Wales as a museum of the Welsh miners, a permanent exhibition of the working and social life of the valleys from the industrial revolution to the present day, including a simulated coal mine and scenes of underground life at various times in the history of the Welsh coalfields. For 120 years, write the initiators of this scheme:

"the hewing, transport and sale of coal dominated the lives of most people in South Wales, an era that is only now coming to an end. If we want to choose our future instead of just letting it happen to us, we must understand this past, take pride in what was brave and good, and see to it what that was bad is never repeated.

"There are several collections of mining machinery that record methods of mining, and the colleges of the University of Wales are building up scholarly collections of books and documents from the coal-field; but there is no place where we, our children, or visitors to Wales can for a while re-enter the time when coal was our life. We need a museum about the special kinds of life that was produced by the coal industry in the Welsh valleys, that will re-create the environment of coal mining and of the mining village, sited in a mining community, and built and staffed by its people."

It is proposed that the museum should contain a photographic exhibition with tape commentaries along the lines of the very successful *Coalface 1900* exhibition that toured Wales in 1972. Such a first token museum could give pilot experience whilst the mine section proper was being constructed, and it could serve as the nucleus of a much larger exhibition to be completed later.

Glyncoerrwg is a compact mining village surrounded by green hills. Some of its streets date from the earliest mining period and subsequent periods are well represented. More than most former mining valleys, the Glyncoerrwg Urban District is suffering from unemployment and a total absence of any planned future other than passive acceptance of dormitory status. There was 25 per cent male unemployment throughout the winter of 1971-72. "A new labour-intensive growth industry using the full range of local talents, and drawing on past skills whilst developing

new ones, is exactly what the situation demands" write the initiators of the scheme:

"The museum could re-create just that local pride that could overcome the main obstacles to the development of the valleys as a new tourist area, namely dereliction, social prejudice and the indiscriminate scattering of rubbish".

Some useful steps are at last being taken in certain part of Britain to preserve important remains of the industrial revolution—machines, factories, means of transportation. Such a Welsh Mining Museum would be a rich addition. It would help present and future generations understand past techniques, past sufferings, and past struggle, and, in so doing, help them to "take pride in what was brave and good, and see to it that what was bad is never repeated".

#### A LIFETIME OF STRUGGLE

*My Generation* by Will Paynter<sup>2</sup> is a typically varied and terse account of a life spent in the working-class movement and must be of absorbing interest to Marxists concerned with the lessons of the stormy half-century since the first World War. Will Paynter brings the struggles of the twenties and thirties to life, and has a shrewd eye for the strengths and weaknesses of some of the main movements in South Wales with which he was so closely associated.

But the most telling conclusions are not those he describes, but those which stand out from the profound personal and political contradictions of this life story. The honesty and directness with which Paynter sets out his deeply held principles and opinions bring out starkly what many who have worked with him most feel. These are the tragedy of his separation from his roots, his departure from the Communist Party after 40 years and his entanglement in the Commission for Industrial Relations and concepts of constitutionalism which are so contrary to the revival of militancy and socialist consciousness taking place today.

Will Paynter embodied some of the finest characteristics of the working class of his generation. The fact that his very devotion to the cause of trade unionism narrowed his conception of the potential power of working class struggle and limited his grasp of revolutionary socialism, is itself typical of some of the deep-seated problems and weaknesses which our working class has yet

to overcome.

Reading this book may help to pinpoint those vital missing links between trade union militancy and the wider political consciousness which are the burning need of the movement today.

#### STRIKES AT FORDS

Much has been said and written about the development in Britain of multi-national firms, mainly US, and the problems that these bring to the workers and their trade unions.

After reading John Mathews' *Ford Strike—the Workers' Story* (Panther, 40p) one has a much better grasp not only of the dangers but also of the possibilities that exist when the nettle is firmly grasped.

This very readable book provides the background to the very many struggles to unionise Fords in Britain, the resistance by the management to any form of trade union organisation, the compromise, after a number of battles, arrived at with the TUC and the first weak trade union joint negotiating machinery heavily weighted in the management's favour.

The section of the book which analyses Ford's many strikes outlines a number of weaknesses, for example the struggle against victimisation of the Seventeen is cursorily treated and the role of the Communists working at Fords in organising the workers into trade unions and for struggle seems poorly dealt with. Nevertheless the author does show the link between the aims and strategy of Fords of Britain with the needs of Ford USA. It exposes quite convincingly the ramifications and the pattern of finance capitalism in its hunt for maximum profits for Ford USA via the multi-national firm:—

"Of the funds used to finance the growth of US owned subsidiaries in Britain, 90 per cent have come from retained profits made in the UK or from finance raised in UK.

"Fords initial investment in Britain was tiny. In 1929, its fixed assets amounted to only £8.9m, but by 1970 they had grown to a mammoth £206.5m. . . ."

"And that's only half the story. The real drain on these assets accumulated by Ford workers is the profits going back each year to Detroit."

The section of the book dealing with the global strategy of Ford Motor Company lays bare the worldwide aspirations and concepts of the big wheels of Ford USA.

"In December 1971 Henry outlined Ford's plans to raise capital spending in 1972 to \$800 millions—foreign capital spending rising to a staggering 45 per

<sup>2</sup> Allen and Unwin Paperback £1.50.

cent of this total" . . . "the most exciting proposition is the Far East. Ford (Asia-Pacific) and South Africa Inc." "The major centre of production will be the Philippines, with subsidiaries in Thailand, South Korea and Australia." "Linked to this drive for dominance in South East Asia is Ford's effort to penetrate the Japanese market".

The interdependence is traced of Fords in Britain with Fords in the other European countries. A strike at Dagenham very soon has repercussions in Germany (West), Belgium, France, Holland, etc.

### CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY TRIAL

The growing attacks on democracy add new interest to the fight for liberty in days gone by.

Time was when to be a Unitarian was to be regarded by the Establishment as a dangerous revolutionary. On July 14, 1791, a Birmingham Church-and-King mob, with the tacit approval of the authorities, attacked and destroyed the house and laboratory of the Unitarian scientist, Joseph Priestley. The same year Thomas Fyshe Palmer, Unitarian Minister of Dundee was sentenced (for sedition) to be transported to Botany Bay.

In May 1793 William Frend, Unitarian, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, at an almost unique University trial, was sentenced by the Vice-Chancellor's Court to be banished from the University. The young Coleridge, enthusiastic supporter of Frend, watched the trial from the gallery. Slogans like "Frend for ever" were chalked by the students on the University walls, and on the smooth green lawns of Trinity and St. Johns the words "Liberty" and "Equality" were written in a train of gunpowder.

Who was this William Frend? Previously students of the British radical movement might have read his radical pamphlet *Peace and Union Recommended* or perhaps his own account of the trial—*An Account of the Proceedings in the University of Cambridge* (1793). Now a serious, and at the same time exceedingly readable, biography has been written by Frida Knight under the title *University Rebel: the Life of William Frend, 1757-1841*.<sup>3</sup>

Frend first became a Cambridge student in 1776 and early was won to radical ideas and involved in radical activities. It should be remembered that Cambridge of that day was traditionally Whig and less conformist than Oxford.

Frend was ordained and elected a Fellow

<sup>3</sup> Gollancz, 1971, £3.00.

(later also appointed a Tutor) at Jesus College, but soon became a critic of the Established Church and a supporter of the Unitarians, who rejected the Mystery of the Three-in-One, of Original Sin and of Atonement, denied that salvation depended upon correctness of belief, and in general, made a plea for the use of reason in religion. They were at that time deeply interested in science and tended to be radical in outlook.

He was removed from the office of Tutor at Jesus after publishing, in May 1788, his *Thoughts on Subscription to Religious Tests*, but remained a Fellow of the College. He was an active and campaigning radical, supporting, amongst other organisations, the London Corresponding Society, which had a section in Cambridge. When in 1793 he published his *Peace and Union* pamphlet strongly criticising the war with France, Frend became the recipient of all the customary attacks on militant radicals of the day. He was a "Jacobin"; he was accused of treasonable correspondence with the National Convention in France. His more reactionary colleagues began to plot his removal.

In May 1793 he was called before the Vice-Chancellor's Court. The eight articles of accusation included "dispersing a scandalous book or pamphlet", "defaming the public liturgy of the established church", "impugning religion as by law established". Despite a prolonged and stubborn defence of his principles, he was "banished" from the University, and his appeal to the University Senate rejected.

Defending himself before a highly prejudiced court Frend made his plea for academic freedom. He attacked his attackers:

"These men misconceive entirely the nature and character of this university."

What should the role of the University be?

"By our studies to investigate truth, it is our ambition to lay it open to the world; and should any of us in the course of his reading see reason to alter his former opinions, or should he explore any latent truth, we will not on that account hold him up to public censure."

He defended the freedom of the press:

"Free inquiry cannot be injurious, except to wicked and depraved minds. Society may be meliorated but can never suffer by it . . . how shall we dispel that horrid gloom of intellectual darkness, which the promoter and his cabal are endeavouring to spread over this university!"

The author of this biography has patiently pursued Frend's life till he died as an octo-

genarian in 1841. She describes his personal and literary friendships with William Godwin, Mary Hays, Charles Lamb, George Dyer and S. T. Coleridge, and his later relations with Sir Francis Burdett.

Frend remained a radical, indeed a radical activist, until the very end of his long life. So very many of the radicals of the 1770's became "respectable" by the 1790's or those of the 1790's by the 1820's or those of the 1820's and 1830's after the passing of the Reform Act of 1832! Not so Frend, and this was very rare.

His was a life that deserved a serious study, and (something which is not too common) received the study that it deserved.

### SOME AUTUMN BOOKS

John Lewis's *The Marxism of Marx* which Lawrence and Wishart published last month (paperback, £2) is a challenging and controversial book. Interesting discussion is bound to arise from what he writes on "dialectics" and "materialism" and the way in which he insists on the opposition of dialectical materialism to all forms of mechanistic and reductionist theory.

Dr. Lewis goes back to the early and original philosophical, sociological and political writings of Marx in order to find the essence of the Marxist revolutionary view of man, society and history. Much emphasis is placed on human consciousness and the vital role of theory in the revolutionary movement. Theory becomes a material force when it grips the masses, Marx wrote—a useful counter to all who suppose the socialist movement can get on very well without it, or who accept easy mechanistic simplifications about how social changes are brought about. A most polemical book!

Later this month there will be published by Lawrence and Wishart the fourth and last volume of D. N. Pritt's study of English law. This final volume deals with *The Substance of the Law* or, as lawyers call it, "substantive law", the main body of civil and criminal law operating in this country. Pritt completed this work just prior to his death, and the four volumes remain as a compendium of his conclusions, as a militant socialist who practised law, about the English legal system.

To be reprinted by Lawrence and Wishart in paperback is *The Petticoat Rebellion* by Marian Ramelson. For some time out of print, this tells the story of the movement for women's liberation in England from the 18th Century onwards.

A very valuable Lawrence and Wishart paperback now in circulation deals with the work-in on the Clyde—*The U.C.S. Work-in*, by Willie Thompson and Finlay Hart, with a foreword by Jimmy Reid. Another short book in paperback about successes won by workers' unity will deal with events much further away—*Chile, Reality and Prospects of Popular Unity*, by Kate Clark. This will be published next month by Lawrence and Wishart, with a foreword by Jack Woddis.

### LUKACS IN ENGLISH

Readers of *Marxism Today* will be interested to know that the Autumn issue of the *New Hungarian Quarterly* (No. 47) will be devoted to the memory of György Lukacs.

It will contain a number of articles and texts previously unpublished in England such as "Labour as a Model of Social Practice", a chapter from his posthumous *Ontology*, written in 1971; the Preface to the volume *Art and Society* (1957); Letters to Paul Ernst (1912-1926) and his *Talk on Futurology* (1970).

The same issue will contain a selection of appreciations of Lukacs' contribution in various fields by leading Hungarian writers and theoreticians.<sup>1</sup>

### MTD—INDEX 1971

Index for 1971 is now available. Send stamped addressed envelope to *MARXISM TODAY*, 16 King Street, London WC2E 8HY. Also Bound Volumes for 1971 (Vol. 15). Price £4, plus 21p p. & p.

<sup>1</sup> The *New Hungarian Quarterly* can be ordered from Central Books or Collets London Bookshop, price 30p plus 10p postage.

## INCREASE OF PRICE

We regret that owing to increased production costs, we have had to increase the price of *MARXISM TODAY* to 20p. per issue as from the November number.

# Higher Education Policy

Digby Jacks

*(The Author is the President of the National Union of Students. He is writing in his personal capacity).*

At the time of writing nobody involved with higher or further education has a clear idea about the policy the present Tory Government intends to adopt in this area. Whilst there have been the Industrial Relations Act, the Common Market legislation, the Immigration Bill, the Housing Finance Bill and other reactionary moves, higher education (apart from the Government's stupid and anti-student union consultative document on student union financing) has received little attention to date. Brian MacArthur, one of the most experienced educational journalists has said that "Awaiting the judgement of the DES at present resembles the puff of white smoke from the Vatican when a new Pope is elected" (THES July 21). Even Sir Kenneth Berrill, chairman of the University Grants Committee is reported as saying "We will wait and see what happens. We have nothing more to do now—we have given out all the money we have for the last quinquennium (1967-72) and for the provisional year."

The present situation is one of uncertainty. Indications are that the Government intends to slow down the rate of expansion of higher education, possibly introduce loans for postgraduate students and emphasise the development of Polytechnics—partly perhaps to cater for the two year Diploma in Higher Education recommended by the James Committee. One of the purposes of economy measures in higher education, we have been lead to believe, is to enable increased provision to be made for nursery schools. This would be a very divisive move, aptly described as robbing Peter at 18 to pay Paul at 3. No doubt the Government thinks that this might be a popular move as students (in Tory mythology) are unpopular and nursery education is the only educational issue with any substantial "electoral mileage" in it. Whilst no one would disagree with the proposition that nursery education should be expanded—indeed many have been campaigning for this increased expenditure for many years, a move of the sort indicated would be seen as a transparent and cynical ploy. Much of educational opinion would see through it and attack it for its divisiveness. The Government might gain a few votes from anti-student mothers with small children, but it would have to contend with a further reduction of confidence from the educational world.

The only item in the Tory Party's 1970 Election

Manifesto that related to higher education was the proposal that there should be an enquiry into teacher education. This was set up in 1970 under the chairmanship of Lord James. The report of the enquiry Committee was published in January 1972. Pressure for an enquiry in the preceding period had been considerable and was based largely on pressure from teachers and students. Much hope was vested in the enquiry into this crucial section of the education system. However, the report itself did not realise these expectations. Since January it has been very substantially criticised by the NUT, the NUS and many of the other interests involved in teacher education.

The report proposed that teacher education should be conceived of as taking place in three cycles. Cycle I would be, according to James, either a first degree course or a Diploma in Higher Education (which was the new course that the Committee envisaged). It was to be a two year course comprising the higher education of the majority of potential teachers who at present undertake the teachers certificate course. Cycle II was envisaged as being the professional component of initial training to be distinguished from higher education undertaken in Cycle I. It would last two years. In the first year the student would acquire the necessary training to teach particular subjects or specialisms. Cycle III would be explicitly vocational in character. In the second year the student would be a licentiate teacher, teaching in schools for the majority of his time. For a small proportion of the time he would be associated with the college or institute of higher education. On the conclusion of Cycle II the successful candidates would receive a degree (the B.A. Ed.). All intending teachers, whether they had completed the Dip. H.E. or had done a degree course in Cycle I would receive this degree. Cycle III was conceived in the report as an optional in service training element for teachers in the schools. The potential teacher would receive his higher education in Cycle I, his professional training in Cycle II while the educational theory and the generalisations associated with it would be developed in Cycle III. It would be an optional one term in seven years that teachers would be able to utilise.

The major objections to this have been that, firstly, it is optional and many teachers, who could most make use of it in service training, would not

in fact avail themselves of the facility. Secondly, the provision of one term in seven years was seen as insufficient. Both the NUT and the NUS in there separate evidences to the Committee argued for their being one year in ten *compulsory* in service provision.

### Opposition to Report

Opposition to the James Report has been widespread. It can be summarised as follows:

1. Its proposals if implemented would divide the teaching profession, far more than is the case at present, into the graduate and the non-graduate, or more accurately between the graduate in possession of a first degree *and* the B.A. (Ed.) i.e. a double graduate, and the teacher who possessed merely the B.A. (Ed.). One of the major demands of teachers had been and is that the teaching profession should be an all graduate profession. The James Committee in its recommendations acceded to this proposal. But the difference between the person who decided to enter teaching at the age of eighteen and the person who decided to become a teacher at the age of twenty-one would not be diminished. Rather the difference would be accentuated. The double graduate would be much more likely to be a secondary school teacher, male and have marked career opportunities. The "single" graduate would have reduced career opportunities, be likely to be female and teach in a primary school. The B.A. (Ed.) would be a second class degree of dubious value.

2. The educational assumption that the James theory of cycles is based upon is the desirability of separating the different elements of teacher education courses (broadly speaking higher or "personal" education, professional training and educational theory) into a consecutive three phase course. This notion is educationally very conservative, ignoring the dynamic inter-relationship that exists between different parts of the course and relying on existing graduate training patterns. Students and teachers argue that a wide variety of course types should be introduced according to local experience and professional need—rather than the national conservative consecutive pattern recommended by James.

3. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the James Report is its suggestion that selection for access to and progress within higher education should be more deeply entrenched. James proposed that all applicants to the suggested Dip. H.E. course would require two "A" levels. The implication of this would be that the "A" level performance, would determine the candidate's access to a university, a polytechnic or a college of education much more so than at present. Those with the "best" "A" level results would go to university, those with the next best to polytechnics and those with the least favourable to colleges of education—a sort of latter day tripartite

system. Not only would this ensure that the majority of teachers were not selected from the academically most able eighteen year olds, but also it would entrench all the evils of 11+ type selection at 18+. Not even Lord James attempted to sustain the position that "A" level attainment is an adequate predictor of future competence in higher education or employment (especially teaching). In addition James suggested that it should be possible for the academically competent individual on completion of the Dip. H.E. to transfer to a degree course in a university or polytechnic at the age of 20. Such a "creaming" process is common in the history of secondary education and would at this level be both divisive and guaranteed to depress markedly the status of the Dip. H.E. qualified applicant to the teaching profession.

4. The James recommendation for the establishment of a Diploma in Higher Education as a new two year course has profound implications. Whilst I would not advocate that higher education, by definition, is a three year university-type degree course, it is quite clear that the educational content of a three year course is almost certain to be greater than that of a two year course. On grounds of educational opportunity it can be cogently argued that there is a need for students to be able to complete their higher education in two years, *if this is what they wish*. Equally in terms of opportunity the student on a two year course should have *the right* to extend the course and convert it into a different qualification from the one originally intended. We definitely need wider educational options and more flexible course patterns in higher education—a flexibility which cannot at present be built into existing three year degree courses. These educational considerations are paramount. James however, gives the impression that the purpose of the Dip. H.E. is to establish the wider acceptability of two year courses as an *alternative* to existing three year courses. Such a proposal is of course attractive to the DES and a Tory Government anxious to cut the costs of higher education provision. It is significant and regrettable that not one University has to date said that it would be prepared to run the Dip. H.E. course, thus ensuring that it will be a low status college of education qualification—by implication only suitable for intending teachers.

5. James is weakest in financial and quantitative directions. None of the report's recommendations have been costed; none were backed up by quantitative data of significance. In particular, the crucial question to any consideration of teacher education, that of teacher supply targets, is studiously avoided. This above all else damns James as a light-weight document. Vague suggestions are made that educational expenditure should be increased, but always hedged around by DES-ese about priorities. Clearly

this sort of report plays right into the hands of those in the DES who are anxious to limit educational expenditure.

6. Perhaps most significant about James so far as higher education is concerned is the implicit assumption of the report that the status of the universities should be maintained or enhanced. James as one of the more reactionary Vice-Chancellors was anxious to shed the low status responsibility for teacher education that is currently discharged by the universities through the Institutes of Education. By so doing the elitist nature of the universities could be better preserved. Of course the status of the universities is of wider significance than their mere institutional form. More important is what can only be called the British Academic Tradition with its mystique of academic freedom, high status knowledge and arbitrary boundaries between subjects defined by academics. Throughout the report the existing compartmentalisation of knowledge, largely produced by the university department system, is upheld. It is most dramatically illustrated in the report by the suggestion that the academically highly qualified individual on completion of a higher degree would not need to have further professional training before teaching in a school. Not only is this quite contrary to existing norms of professional training but it also assumes that the academically qualified is *ipso facto* a competent teacher—because, one can but assume, teaching as envisaged by the James Report—at least for the élite teachers, is no more or less than the imparting of the truths of particular academic subjects.

### The Role of the Students

It is not the purpose of this article to consider in detail the contemporary problems and perspectives of the student movement. It is rather to consider the present problems for the development of higher education. However, in this context the role of the student movement is one of major importance. Indeed as the student body has grown in size and become more politically conscious, its power to influence the course of higher educational development has increased. By what means has this and can it be demonstrated? Before considering this question more specifically it is worth noting two or three major points:

- (i) Students are the largest interest group associated directly with higher education. Within the student body the range of experience and educational activity is enormous. This provides a very fertile ground from which, through organisational forms such as student unions and the NUS, radical educational policies can be expressed.
- (ii) It is for students that higher education exists, although the purposes of any higher education system are manifold and of the widest social and

economic significance. Nevertheless the specific provision of courses must, in the first instance, be directed towards student needs.

- (iii) Unlike many academic staff and teachers, the overwhelming majority of students do not have a direct career stake in the higher education system. Personal or vested interest considerations are not as important to students as they are to academics and administrators. They do not desire promotion and status, rather a satisfactory education.

What then is the effectiveness of the student body?

In the recent period one of the most important concerns of students has been to assert the demand for autonomous student unions. This has taken place against the background of a Government wishing for reactionary political reasons, to weaken and undermine student organisations. The struggle for more autonomous student unions has proceeded to date with some success, although the Government has not as yet decided how it wished the pattern of financing for student unions to continue in future. The importance of this issue is that it establishes the student body with an organisationally independent voice able to criticise and express its views about matters of concern to it—in this context questions of educational policy. Given the present relationships between student unions and college authorities, the demand for autonomy also raises the principle of the relationship between the institution of higher education and the state. Considering for example the Government's policies for Research and Development, the introduction of the so-called customer-contractor principle and the takeover by Government Departments of large amounts of research activity previously undertaken through the agencies of the semi-autonomous Research Councils, the raising of the question of autonomy as a principle of relevance to institutions is extremely important. Autonomy in this context must not be seen as an abstract or independent principle but rather one which can and should be used in directions of social need and

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value—as opposed to the requirements of capitalists and the state.

### Representation

Another principle of major relevance to students—and one also of a wider significance—is that of representation. Demands for student representation and more general proposals for the democratisation of institutions of higher education run directly counter to the present established patterns of institutional Government and the relations between the institutions and central and local government authority. Students have argued strongly and fought for more democratic decision making processes. The argument is that teachers, students, other workers in the institutions and the wider community should be much more actively involved in decision making. At present institutions are run in the main by small groups of senior administrators, academics, local authority worthies and often powerful industrial and commercial interests. At every level the running of higher education needs to be democratised. The NUS has proposed that a national higher education commission be established for the development of higher education policy and the overall planning of the system. This body would be democratically composed of all the interests associated with higher education and be responsible for the administration of all sectors and institutions within the system. Given an initial desire on the part of students to be involved in decisions taken about particular courses they are engaged upon, it has become clear that the whole structure needs to be democratised. This poses sharp questions of a democratic nature—who controls and who should control the colleges and universities?

Student demands for improved grants and better facilities are clearly of importance. As one of the major national points of conflict between students and the Government, student campaigning activities are in the best interests of the expansion of educational provision and a powerful means of challenging the established orthodoxies of reducing costs in higher education.

The most important recent developments in the student movement have been those associated with the concern to make higher education more socially relevant. The prevailing norm about the role of higher education is that industry, commerce and employers generally should be provided with suitable “products” of direct benefit to them. Students have begun to see the limitations of these policies and that they serve primarily the needs of a privileged minority and not the community as a whole. Two particular developments have been of importance. First, the increasing association between the student movement and the labour movement. For reasons of changed occupational expectation on

graduation, graduate unemployment and other objective changes in the student situation, for reasons of an increased political consciousness about the nature and role of the labour movement and because of the work of socialists, communists and other activists, the student movement is objectively and subjectively more closely associated in a mass way with the labour movement than it ever has been before.

Second, the increasing concern among active students that their courses and the institutions themselves should be more closely related to community needs has created Student Community Action. As a rather nebulous aspect of the student movement, it has raised fundamental questions about course content and the relationship between students and the community in which they live. Community projects and demands for curricular reform have had the effect of beginning to alter student attitudes to higher education. Linked with a developing contact with the labour movement the student movement has been prevented from becoming introverted and “hung up” on intellectualist, vanguardist and ultra-left conceptions of the students’ role in social change. The most important educational questions have been raised and now assume a central importance—why should not admission requirements be altered so as to enable far wider sections of the population to benefit from higher education? Why should not course structures, options and assessment techniques be similarly altered to meet this wider access? Why shouldn’t courses be concerned with the immediate problems and needs of the majority of the population and not just the industrialists and those who employ graduate labour?

The student body has begun to pose questions, adopt policies and frame campaigns which challenge in a most radical way the policies of successive British Governments, and in particular that of the present Tory Government. Ideas of autonomy, democracy, association with the labour movement and educational reform to meet the needs of the working class, point the way for the future development of higher education.

### Alternative Policy Needed

As stated earlier, it is not clear at the time of writing what the Tory Government’s higher education policies will be. The James Report has been published and the Government has stated that it wishes to consult widely before making decisions about the future of teacher education. The furore the report raised will make it very difficult for them to find a consensus package which meets their needs for economy at the same time as being acceptable to some of the interests directly involved. The problems for the Government are even more marked

for higher education policy as a whole. Demand for higher education increases year by year and any move to restrict opportunity will not be popular with a wide section of the population, particularly young people.

However, present indications are not at all favourable. Their Research and Development policy referred to above has been intensely criticised. Their industrial training policy embodied in the document "Training for the Future" has similarly caused opposition because of its reduction of provision (the very opposite of what is demanded in times of high unemployment) and the abolition of the levy-grant system which imposed a statutory obligation on employers to industrial training. On the other hand the Government's decision to raise the school leaving age to 16 will cause them difficulties in formulating a higher education policy. A larger school population will cause a greater demand for higher and further education. A reduction of opportunity at 16+ and 18+ will be all the more difficult to implement if opportunity is to be created in the 15 to 16 year. One thing is certain, reactionary higher education policies will be met with the organised strength and influence of both students and teachers.

There is evidently a need for an alternative higher education policy. The recently produced Labour Party draft manifesto goes some way in this respect.

It proposes that there be a million full time students by 1980 and that there should be a comprehensive adult education service. However, there is no break with the discredited binary policy (a policy based upon a higher education system clearly divided between the universities and the public sector) elaborated by the last Labour Government. The draft generally leaves more questions unanswered than answered. The basis for an alternative policy should rest on the principle of the need to establish a comprehensive system of post school education. The Labour document refers to the desirability of establishing a single sector for the 16-18 age group. The same principle should apply post-18. The objectives of this comprehensive reorganisation should be: to overcome the arbitrary sectoral, status and administrative distinctions in the existing system; the creation of a more democratic pattern of government of the institutions; a wider access to higher education (higher education must cease to be the prerogative of but a minority of the 18-21 age group) and an alteration of the character of courses in higher education such that they become more directly relevant to the population in general. The student body has a major role to play in the detailed articulation of this alternative policy and in the campaign over a long period of time which will be necessary to achieve it.

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## France—Programme for Democracy

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*The extracts, which together amount to about one-third of the original document, were selected and translated by Peter Avis.*

*The agreement reached on this Programme, drawn up in the year before the coming legislative elections, is an extremely important event in French political life. Even commentators and politicians of the Right have agreed that the document, the result of long months of negotiation, can herald a dramatic change in the balance of political forces in France.*

*The Programme proclaims the aims of developing democracy in every area of French life and of opening the road to Socialism. It includes many detailed proposals, only alluded to in this abridged version, for the functioning of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary in a democratic France.*

### **Preamble**

In presenting a joint programme for Government, the Socialist Party and the French Communist Party are conscious of having accomplished a political act of great importance. They together affirm their intention to put an end to the injustices and fumbblings of the present régime. To achieve this and to open the road to Socialism, fundamental changes must be brought about in the political, economic and social life of France.

The perspectives opened up by the union of the Left and the gathering of all the popular forces, the proposals set out in this programme, are the means which will enable the French people to live better, to transform their lives. The basic concern of the programme is to satisfy their needs and aspirations.

This programme is a programme of action; it constitutes a contract between the parties and between them and the country; it creates a new situation permitting the installation of a genuine political and economic democracy.

The French Communist Party and the Socialist Party naturally retain their individuality. Each party holds to the principles on which it was founded. Certain of their political judgments are different. This does not jeopardise their will and their ability to govern together.

The agreement now registered between them is

sufficiently wide for them to propose to the country a joint programme for Government at the next Parliament.

The Socialist Party and the French Communist Party are convinced that this programme responds to the aspirations of millions of French people and to the necessity of developing democracy.

They call on the French people to support the programme and to ensure its success. They submit it to other democratic parties and organisations and invite them to join in this action.

## **Part I**

### **LET US LIVE BETTER AND TRANSFORM OUR LIVES**

#### **Chapter 1: Wages, Jobs and Working Conditions**

#### **Purchasing power**

A regular improvement in the purchasing power of wage earners is indispensable if they are to satisfy their increasing needs. The development of the economy will contribute to this improvement.

The principal factors determining an increase in purchasing power will be the raising of wages and social benefits, the stabilising of prices and a reduction of the taxation burden upon lower income groups.

Wages and salaries will be increased substantially, especially for the low paid and those who do the heaviest work. As of now, no wage should be lower than 1,000 Francs a month.

Regional differences, as well as all wage differentials based on age, sex or nationality, will be abolished.

A single system of wage scales covering all qualifications and establishing a guaranteed minimum wage for each level will be introduced into collective and workshop agreements. The maximum difference between wages will be fixed according to the same methods. Wage levels will depend solely on qualification, responsibility and length of service.

A new minimum monthly wage, covering the whole country and every occupation, will be fixed and regularly revised to follow movements of a price index established in agreement with the trade unions. This minimum wage will rise faster than the average wage.

Family allowances will be immediately reassessed, tied to wages, and will not be reduced in value. Being designed to compensate for the extra costs a child entails for a family, they will be paid for each child, whether the mother earns an income or not.

The retirement age will be lowered to 60 for men and 55 for women, but the right to work will be maintained beyond this age. This measure is particularly urgent for workers doing heavy or unhealthy jobs.

Pensions will be generally increased. They must not be less than the guaranteed national minimum wage and they will quickly be brought to 75 per cent of the average annual wage of a person's ten best working years. When a pensioner dies, the pension will revert to a surviving partner at 60 per cent of its value.

### **Hours and conditions of work**

The effective working week for all workers will be reduced to 40 hours over five days with no loss of wages.

Holidays will be increased for young workers, women, workers doing heavy jobs and especially unskilled workers.

The Government will consider it to be one of its prime objectives to eradicate chronic unemployment and under-employment, especially for women and young people.

This objective will be attained by means of the new policy of restructuring and developing the economy, the investments this will bring about, the reduction in hours of work, the extension of vocational training and the raising of wages.

As an immediate step, unemployment benefits will be reassessed and entitlement to them will be extended (to include young people seeking a first job and women taking up employment again after

the legal one-year rest from work following the birth of a child). These benefits will not be less than the guaranteed national minimum wage.

The National Plan will establish the number of immigrant workers to be welcomed each year so that consequential economic and social measures may be worked out. Immigrant workers will enjoy the same rights as French workers. The law will guarantee their political, social and trade union rights.

### **Social legislation**

The Government will put into effect a basic reform of the labour laws. It will draw up a new Labour Code with the aim of extending and guaranteeing workers' rights and liberties.

Workers in the public and nationalised sector will benefit from new statutes, drawn up with the participation of the trade union organisations.

The right to strike will be guaranteed and all regulations and laws threatening it will be repealed.

The freedom to form trade unions will be ensured, and their independence both of the State and of political parties will be recognised. Workers will have the full right to join the trade union of their choice.

A series of measures will be taken in agreement with the trade union organisations to guarantee and develop the exercise of trade union rights within factories. In particular, these rights will include the holding of meetings during working hours at the place of work, the protection of workers and militants against victimisation, and the obligatory reinstatement of those who have been sacked illegally.

Managements which fail to observe the rules laid down in various fields (wages, hours of work, production speeds, working conditions, health and safety, workers' rights and liberties) will be subject to legal sanctions after application to the appropriate labour tribunal by the workers' representatives (trade unions or works committees).

### **Chapter 2: Health and Social Security**

The material insecurity resulting from age, unemployment and sickness haunts the minds of millions of French people in the present society. This state of affairs must be ended.

The best medical care must be made available to all. This will include preventive medicine, as well as diagnostic, nursing and rehabilitation services, in a co-ordinated and humanised system in which the people's health will no longer be subject to the law of profit.

A rational and democratic organisation of all health services will be created. It will respect the principles of medical confidentiality, freedom of doctors to prescribe as they wish, and freedom of patients to choose their doctor.

A unified hospital service under public control will be established.

Priority will be given to improving and developing the public hospital service and democratising its management. As an immediate step, the existing private profit-making institutions will be granted a statute governing their obligations and the conditions under which they will function.

At the same time, while respecting the right of doctors to choose how they will practice, new methods will be made possible, notably by the creation of properly equipped health centres gathering together general practitioners, specialists, medical auxiliaries and social workers. These centres will be under democratic management and will be able, with the agreement of the practitioners and patients concerned, to introduce new methods of payment for the medical and para-medical staff.

In addition, we shall end current practices in the pharmaceutical industry which are often wasteful from the point of view of public health and lead to a high level of surplus profits. To this end, the pharmaceutical trusts will be nationalised and a Government-sponsored department will be set up to promote pharmaceutical research, to control production and to ensure the supply of scientific information to the medical profession.

A return to the system of reimbursement of 80 and 100 per cent of the cost of medical treatment will be obtained by the repeal of the 1967 ordinances. The Government will set itself the aim of advancing by stages to a system of free medical care.

### **Chapter 3: Town Planning, Housing and Public Services**

Priority measures will be taken in the fields of housing, public transport and town planning—as in the health services—to enable working people urgently to improve their living conditions.

#### **Town planning**

A new type of planning will be aimed at controlling development of the conurbations, reducing the excessive inequalities in growth between different towns, and meeting social and economic needs by a managed and co-ordinated distribution of public services.

This planning will seek to create within each conurbation and district, a proper balance between population, jobs, housing and public services. It will break down the segregation of activities and social classes which at present divides towns into zones and will ensure that homes are available to ordinary people in the town centres.

Planning for people and not for monopoly profits will demand fundamental changes in the structure of the national economy: nationalisation of the key sectors of the economy and democratic control.

The elected bodies (from the National Assembly to the local councils) will have effective authority over planning. In organising a permanent dialogue with the people, they will make planning a communal activity with which the trade unions and other interested organisations will also be associated.

#### **Land policy**

There can be no democratic planning or solution to the crisis in housing and public utilities without control over the use of land and control by the local authorities over the sale and price of building plots. Speculation in land and property must be brought to an end. The public authorities will be given the following means to achieve this:

- the right of pre-emption on all transactions in land, whether built on or vacant, within urban areas including adjoining areas of probable development. Outside these areas, there will be a general right of pre-emption on vacant land;
- price fixing by reference to an earlier period when the price of land was more stable;
- compulsory purchase in the public interest on the basis of these earlier price levels;
- a property tax on land, whether built on or vacant, determined on the basis of previous price levels, and a surplus value tax on prices above these. The product of these taxes will go to financing public development schemes.

All these powers will be exercised so that the interests of small proprietors are safeguarded.

#### **Housing**

Public housing will be declared a priority concern. The target of 700,000 housing units to be built annually will be reached during the first years of the Parliament. Out of this total, three-quarters will be subsidised public housing (mostly for letting). A portion of other housing will benefit from special State aid. The renovation of old houses will be encouraged but will have to be for the benefit of ordinary people. As a general rule people will have a right to be rehoused in the same place.

The social service concept of public housing will be re-established and extended. Rents will be stabilised at moderate levels and based strictly on maintenance costs.

In the private sector, rents will be calculated according to a strict procedure, which will take into account the living space, comfort, quality and situation of the accommodation.

#### **Transport**

Priority will be given to the development of public transport.

Fares will be fixed at a low level. Free transport cards, paid for by employers, will be issued to

workers in all conurbations where public transport facilities exist.

#### **The fight against pollution**

Pollution of water and the atmosphere, defilement of the environment in both country and town, traffic jams and noise are making living conditions ever more unpleasant. These factors are not the inevitable result of technical progress, industrial development and urbanisation. The capitalist system is responsible.

By refusing monopoly demands for profit, the democratic Government will be able to make full use of scientific and technical progress to resolve the problems of pollution.

The firms causing pollution will be held responsible for repairing the damage they have done and for providing the investment required to eliminate the source of nuisance.

#### **Chapter 4: Education**

Educational policy will be designed to satisfy the nation's economic, social and cultural needs and will guarantee for all the right to primary and secondary—as well as further education. The school will have the triple task of preparing people for work, citizenship and life. The educational system will reject every form of social segregation and cultural inequality and seek to develop each person's abilities to the full; every opportunity will be given to people to take up or to resume studies and to change their occupations during the course of their lives.

#### **The struggle against social segregation**

The struggle against social segregation is the priority question. It will require decisive immediate measures as well as a long-term campaign.

At every level of State education, free tuition, books, equipment, sports facilities and school transport will be provided. Free provision, however, is not sufficient to guarantee equal opportunities. Therefore financial assistance to families, according to their need, will replace the present system of grants.

The creation of a network of 1,000 crèches providing welfare and educational facilities will be undertaken from the beginning of the Parliament.

The Government will see to it that all children between the ages of two and six are admitted to nursery schools in both urban and rural areas.

A comprehensive co-educational school system from the reception class to the age of 15 will enable children to progress up the ladder without impediment and on an equal footing.

To help overcome inequalities of a social origin the comprehensive system will have a basic curriculum common to all pupils. A wide range of optional subjects will be grafted on to this curriculum,

diversifying and enriching it, and helping children to choose their vocation, but not leading in any way to the maintenance or reimposition of separate divisions.

The Government will raise the school leaving age to 18 as quickly as possible.

#### **A secular State system**

All sectors of primary and secondary education and an important part of further education will be united in a single secular system under the control of the Ministry of Education.

In the period of the first Parliament, private establishments benefiting from public funds will as a general rule be nationalised.

Being secular, the State educational system will strictly respect all creeds and all philosophies. It will not teach an "official philosophy". Genuinely secular education, based on the scientific approach and democracy, can give a full and critical understanding of reality, encompassing all aspects of life and human activity.

All parents will have the right, outside the classroom and without the support of public funds, to give their children the religious or philosophical education of their choice.

#### **Civic and moral education**

Civic and moral education will not be limited to a dull description of the country's institutions; it will examine problems of the workplace, planning, social life and the environment, as well as questions of peace, international co-operation, under-development, oppression and colonialism. This subject will not be limited to a separate slot in the time-table; it will be brought alive by being taught in conjunction with other subjects. It will inform the whole of school life which will be organised to develop personality and character, voluntary service and personal initiative.

#### **The right to an occupation**

The reorganisation by stages of the three school years following on from the basic comprehensive system will lead to the creation of a co-ordinated and unsegregated course of studies, both general and specialised, either giving an immediate vocational qualification or entry into higher education.

The new legislation will guarantee the rights of workers who undergo further education, with respect to pay during a course, having jobs kept open, and having the higher qualifications they gain taken into account.

#### **Higher education**

On coming into office the Government will make the universities self-governing and genuinely demo-

cratic institutions while seeking to prevent a situation of competition or anarchy.

At every level, students will be effectively associated in decision-making. The universities will not have the right to bestow upon them a culture the aims and purposes of which they have not been able to discuss.

#### **Chapter 5: Scientific and Technical Research**

Research activities in all areas will be pursued according to two fundamental criteria: the participation of France in the advancement of knowledge, and the satisfaction of individual and common needs.

The freedom of scientific investigation and of publication will be safeguarded.

#### **Chapter 6: Sport**

Workers under the age of 18 will be allowed five hours of physical and sports activities to be organised by the works committees.

Increased and more widely distributed aid will be given to people's sports organisations whose independence and diversity will be respected.

A Higher Council of sport and physical culture will be created. It will include on a democratic basis representatives of the State (Ministry of Education and other Ministries concerned), the sports movement, teachers' associations, trade unions and youth organisations. It will draw up the national policy for sport for submission to Parliament.

#### **Chapter 7: Leisure**

Leisure time will be increased for all workers both by a reduction in working hours and an improvement in transport facilities etc. In strict respect for individual, family and collective liberties, the public authorities will enable all French people to enrich their leisure time.

The Government will concentrate on conserving natural beauties and organising leisure, cultural and tourist activities to meet an immense social need. In this way, the inheritance of our countryside, coasts, rivers, forests and mountains will be protected and made accessible to all. They will be cleansed of pollution and defended against the appetites of big business.

#### **Chapter 8: Cultural Life**

Freedom of creation and expression will be guaranteed for all, in particular by the abolition of all forms of censorship and pre-censorship.

Culture is neither a commodity nor a luxury. It will not be reserved for a special social group or judged on the profit motive. The Government will seek, with those concerned, to break the stranglehold of financial interests over the whole field of cultural activity: the cinema, theatre, publishing,

recording, television, video and cassette equipment, etc.

While a wide private sector will remain, a programme of nationalisation and public investment will free important areas of cultural life from the control of the monopolies. This will not mean bureaucratisation and the transformation will help to guarantee a genuine and free confrontation of opinions, schools, styles and experiences.

The Government will recognise the indispensable function for society of artistic and literary creation and will do everything to allow artists, writers and performers to fulfil this function freely.

#### **Chapter 9: Emancipation of Women**

The emancipation of women requires their participation in economic, social, cultural and political life. It demands new laws, concrete measures, material means to enable women to achieve equality in work, society and the family.

Laws discriminating against women will be repealed.

New laws will be drawn up to deal with parental authority, matrimonial status, dependence and divorce. The right to divorce by mutual consent will be recognised in this legislation which will also establish the responsibilities of both parents with regard to their children and their material and moral needs.

Women will enjoy equal rights with men in matters of wages, vocational training, further education, employment and promotion.

To enable working women to assume in the best conditions the responsibilities of worker and mother, maternity leave will be increased to 16 weeks, special leave will be given to either parent to care for a sick child; the costs of having a child looked after will be reimbursed by means of an income tax claw-back scheme, a wide network of low-priced communal facilities will be created to relieve women and families of a large part of domestic work and the number of home helps will be increased.

#### **Chapter 10: The Family**

The Government's whole social and family policy will enable parents to bring up their children in good conditions. Methods of contraception will be widely publicised. They will be made available under medical advice to those who wish to use them. The repressive laws concerning abortion will be repealed. New legislation will be introduced, based on the recognition of individual liberties and responsibilities. Abortion will no longer be considered as a method of contraception.

#### **Chapter 11: Youth**

The age of majority and the right to vote will be at 18.

Two important principles will guide the policy of the Government: to encourage young people in the exercise of their responsibilities in society, and to work for the suppression of all social inequalities so that young people will have equal opportunities in education, careers, employment, leisure, sport and culture.

All the measures designed to guarantee the right to work will have a special importance for youth who are among the first to suffer from unemployment. The same applies to the measures ending discrimination on grounds of age or sex. Apprentices will be guaranteed a wage equal to 40 per cent of the national minimum wage in the first year of work, 60 per cent in the second year and 80 per cent in the third.

National service will be reduced to six months. A democratic soldier's code will be established. The rights of expression, association, thought and religious belief will be guaranteed.

Conscientious objectors will be neither favoured nor penalised. They will complete their legal period of service and will be assigned to general duties. They will enjoy the same rights and liberties as other citizens.

#### **A National Youth Committee**

In order to guarantee that the opinions and aspirations of youth have proper expression, a National Youth Committee will be set up. It will be composed of representatives of the Ministries concerned, of the organisations representing youth and children, of further education and recreational associations, of trade unions, elected authorities and sports organisations.

Elected representatives of the various organisations will compose a majority of the membership of the National Committee which will be consulted regularly on proposals for laws and regulations concerning youth.

## **Part II**

### **DEMOCRATISE THE ECONOMY, DEVELOP THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND PLAN FOR PROGRESS**

#### **Chapter 1: Democracy at the Place of Work and Democratic Management**

Economic democracy and political democracy are indivisible; their joint development implies that each worker, each citizen, shall possess at every level the possibility and the means of participating in decision making, including the choice of means and the control over execution and results.

It is a major requirement of our time that workers should participate ever more widely and actively in management.

With an extensive public and nationalised sector, the Government will encourage in law and in practice the development of democratic forms of management. The extension and democratisation of the public sector will thus enable workers to assume their responsibilities wherever and however they can.

An employer will no longer have the arbitrary power to sack a worker. It will be unlawful to dismiss a worker before he has been given another job with similar conditions.

Collective and workshop agreements will have to include provisions concerning speed of production, workshifts, holidays and assignment of duties.

Heavy and monotonous jobs will systematically be classified. Some of them will qualify for a reduction in the working week without loss of pay. By stages, the workers concerned will all be transferred to other jobs during the course of their working lives.

Works committees, and representatives of the employees—including shop stewards when they exist within an establishment—will have to be consulted before any measure is taken regarding the engagement of labour, dismissals, designation of duties, transfers, grading, the fixing of production speeds and working conditions in general.

Works committees and trade union branches will be given full information about the management of the enterprise.

They will have the right and the means to call workers' meetings at the place of work to discuss this information. One hour a month in paid working time will be reserved for this purpose.

Office and factory committees and in general all workers' representatives will be elected by proportional representation from lists presented by the trade union organisations.

Political parties will have freedom of expression and organisation at the place of work.

#### **Democratic management of the public sector**

Changes—both in law and in practice—in forms of ownership will lay the basis in the public sector for a big development of participation by workers and their organisations in the direction and management of the nationalised industries. The democratisation of these undertakings will at the same time require a thorough reform of their managerial structures.

While placing their activities within the context of the National Plan which they will themselves have helped to draw up, the nationalised industries will fix their own options. They will be self-managing. They will make policy in particular by deciding on future plans, budget and markets. Control by the State, and in particular by the National Assembly, over their management will be exercised *a posteriori*. Thus, nationalisation will not mean State management.

### **The extension of workers' rights**

When workers in an enterprise express the wish and when the structure of the enterprise seems suitable, workers' participation in management and direction will take on new forms. These are seen by the Socialist Party in the perspective of self-management ("autogestion") and by the French Communist Party as part of a constant development in democratic management. They will be determined by agreement between the democratic Government, the management of the enterprise concerned and the trade unions.

Democratisation of management, as provided for above, will be extended to the whole public and nationalised sector, including those industries where the State will have financial control.

In this way transfer of the commanding heights of the economy from the private to the public sector and the installation of democratic methods of management that this transfer will allow, will bring about the transformation of society opening the road to Socialism.

### **Chapter 2: Democratisation and Extension of the Public Sector**

In order to end the domination of big business and to introduce a new economic and social policy, breaking with the policy big business pursues, the Government will bring about the phased transfer to the community of the principal means of production and those financial levers of power now in private hands.

As well as nationalisation, appropriation of property by the community will take the form of public and mixed economy corporations, co-operative societies, friendly societies, local public services, etc.

A minimum amount of nationalisation will be undertaken from the beginning of the Parliamentary session. This policy of transfer to the community will immediately include the banks and finance houses as well as those industrial enterprises which are strategic to the key sectors of the economy, i.e.:

- enterprises which have the character of a public service meeting basic social needs;
- companies depending on public funds, whether by way of marketing arrangements, subsidies or preferential credits;
- the principal centres of capitalist accumulation which control the greater part or the totality of production in their industries, thereby limiting competition to a few giant firms;
- enterprises controlling sectors essential for the development of the economy.

The achievement of this minimum amount of nationalisation will make it possible to limit and control the monopolies. An important private sector will remain.

The nationalisation programme will be geared to the development of the economy and the needs of the people who will play a determining role by their readiness to assume great responsibilities. For this reason, if the workers should wish their enterprise to be taken into the public or nationalised sector, the Government would be able to propose this to Parliament.

The whole of the banking and financial sector will be nationalised. That is to say:

(a) all the merchant banks, the principal finance holding companies and deposit banks. The activities of foreign banks will be controlled by the Bank of France, which will see to it that they do not hinder the nationalisation programme, or oppose the objectives of the National Plan and of the new economic policy; (b) hire purchase, property finance and leasehold credit companies; (c) the major private insurance companies, with the exception of genuine friendly societies.

In industry, a minimum extension of the public sector will be obtained by the following measures.

1. Nationalisation of these sectors: (a) all mineral resources, armaments, the space and aircraft industries, nuclear power and the pharmaceutical industry; (b) the greater part of the electronics industry (computers) and the chemical industry.

By virtue of these provisions the Government will upon taking office proceed to nationalise the following groups: (a) Dassault, Roussel-Uclaf, Rhône-Poulenc; (b) ITT-France, Thomson Brandt, Honeywell-Bull, Pechiney-Ugine-Kuhlmann, St. Gobain-Pont à Mousson, GEC.

2. Public responsibility will be exercised by State shareholding, including majority shareholding: (a) in the steel and oil industries (Usinor-Vallourec, Wendel-Sidélor, Schneider, the French Oil Company, CFR, Total); (b) in sea and air transport, water treatment and distribution, telecommunications, finance and motorway concessions.

The democratic Government will decide upon the measures required to protect the interests of small shareholders. Equitable levels of compensation will be paid for the businesses taken over. An important distinction will be made between the smaller shareholders living on their savings and the big shareholders.

### **Chapter 3: Democratic Planning**

Workers, organisations and elected bodies will have full access to the sources and means of economic and social information. Carrying out of the National Plan will depend essentially on participation of the workers at every level.

### **Chapter 4: Regional Planning**

The principal object of regional planning will be to secure a fair distribution of wealth throughout

the country. It will be a priority concern to resolve problems of employment which have resulted from the uneven development between different regions.

#### **Chapter 5: Industrial Policy**

The public and nationalised sector will play a major part in implementing industrial policy. It will be the means of directing production, bringing about the necessary conversions, and reinforcing and adapting industrial structures in order to develop co-operation and face foreign competition.

The Government will encourage enterprises to be economically and socially profitable by creating healthy competition wherever necessary.

Foreign companies operating in France will have to respect national laws and the National Plan. All investment by foreign companies will have to benefit the French economy.

#### **Chapter 6: Agricultural Policy**

Everything will be done to develop and modernise agriculture, an important factor in maintaining economic and natural harmony, by improving the working and living conditions of the small and medium-sized producers who represent and will continue to represent in the years immediately ahead, the majority of people working in the countryside.

#### **Chapter 7: Tradespeople and Small Businessmen**

Threatened by the concentration of capital and accelerated economic change, tradespeople and other small businessmen are facing a serious crisis, aggravated by excessive taxation and other charges.

This sector will be given confidence and security with help in conversions, modernisation loans, encouragement in forming associations and co-operatives, and vocational training.

#### **Chapter 8: Budgetary and Taxation Policy**

The national budget will be directed primarily to increasing consumption and developing public utilities (education and training, health services, scientific research, transport, communications, etc.).

The budget will be relieved by a reduction in military expenditure and by a reduction in the subsidies, credits and excessive tax exemptions which result from capitalist wastage of industrial resources and from property speculation. It will also benefit from reorganisation of the public markets and price controls.

#### **Chapter 9: Prices and the Fight against Inflation**

Nationalisation of the key sectors of industry and of the financial system will play a fundamental part in the fight against inflation.

Individual public and private enterprises will fix their own prices; the State will control their general movement. In particular, it will impose price control

for essential goods and for materials required in education and culture.

#### **Chapter 10: Foreign Exchange and Defence of the Currency**

Popular support is the first condition for the defence of the currency against speculation.

Stabilisation of internal prices and the increased dynamism of the national economy will help to balance payments and discourage speculation.

The Government will from the beginning take strict measures by relying on the nationalised sector (and in the first place the banking system) to re-inforce exchange control. Currency speculation will constitute a legal offence.

#### **Chapter 11: Monetary and Financial Policy**

The Bank of France and the National Credit Council, whose statutes will be democratised, will exercise a real control over the distribution of credit. Interest rates will be reduced for investments which are considered a priority under the National Plan.

Better training, the reduction of working hours and improved working and living conditions will bring about increased labour productivity.

Advertisement expenditure will be limited to what is necessary to give genuine information to purchasers.

The capitalist logic of profit and exports engenders uneven growth which fails to satisfy basic needs and increases inequalities. The development of economic and political democracy, based on a wide public sector and on the active participation of the workers, will lead to the establishment of another logic—that of even growth in the interest of the majority.

### **Part III**

#### **DEMOCRATISE STATE INSTITUTIONS. SAFEGUARD AND EXTEND CIVIL LIBERTIES**

##### **Chapter 1: Civil Liberties**

Since 1958, the present régime has over the years built up an arsenal of repressive laws which threaten democracy and the liberties of all. The French people must preserve and develop their democratic traditions. All laws which endanger the citizen's liberties must be repealed and laws to protect them must be voted.

##### **Individual liberties**

The system of Habeas Corpus will be instituted and respect for the principle of assumption of innocence will be ensured.

Freedom of thought and expression will be safeguarded. Inviolability of the home, and privacy of correspondence and conversation will be safe-

guarded. The citizen will be protected against the threats to privacy in the development of data gathering techniques.

Racial discrimination and anti-semitism, and their expression, will be forbidden and subject to legal sanctions.

#### **Collective liberties**

The freedoms to demonstrate, to distribute publications, to meet and to form associations will be safeguarded.

The freedom to strike will be guaranteed. All laws and regulations limiting it, in either the public or the private sector, will be repealed. The freedom to form trade unions and their independence both of the State and of political parties will also be guaranteed.

The police will be democratised in its recruitment. Professional training for the police will be reformed and extended.

Independence of the judiciary must be re-established and guaranteed.

Sentencing policy and the prison system will be reformed. A special effort will be made in favour of supervised rehabilitation.

Capital punishment will be abolished.

#### **Political parties**

Recognition of the role and the plurality of parties implies a guarantee of their rights. There shall be no confusion between parties and the State apparatus.

Corruption and violence will not be tolerated. Movements which use armed violence or call for its use will be forbidden in accordance with the legislation of 1936.

If the majority parties lose the confidence of the country, they will give up power to resume the struggle in opposition. But democratic power, whose existence implies the support of a majority of the people, will have as its principal task to satisfy the working masses. It will therefore be strengthened by their increasingly active support.

#### **Chapter 2: National Institutions**

Under the present régime, the Head of State possesses excessive powers in the conduct of internal and foreign affairs and he exercises them without control.

The provisions in the Constitution which have led to the installation and abuses of personal power must be cancelled or corrected.

It belongs to the Government, responsible before the National Assembly, to decide and conduct national policy.

#### **Chapter 3: Local Authorities and Decentralisation**

Large-scale measures of decentralisation will be introduced so that there may be real participation by all in the decisions which concern them.

This supposes a reinforcement of the autonomy of local authorities by the transfer to them of

powers of investigation, decision-making, management and financing.

#### **Chapter 4: The Civil Service**

The administrative apparatus is profoundly marked by the class character of the State. In addition, the interpenetration between the parties of the present majority and the higher Civil Service helps to regulate the way in which the State machinery is used for the profit of big business.

In order to end this concentration of power, the administration must be brought to serve the nation. It must be democratised and its efficiency must be improved. The State apparatus must be distinct from the political parties.

#### **Chapter 5: The Right to Information**

The right to information is an individual right and is fundamental to democracy.

For the most part, information is provided by the newspapers, radio and television. There exists a contradiction between the public character of information and the increasingly private character of the ownership of the communications media. Thus, the French Radio and Television Organisation, which ought to serve the nation, is an instrument of propaganda in the hands of the Government, itself serving the interests of big business. As for the newspapers, so long as a small number of capitalist groups are able to control the means of expression as well as the means of production, one cannot properly say that freedom of the Press exists.

The communications media must therefore be freed from the domination of big business.

Another factor in the freedom of information will be the guarantee of pluralism in the expression of ideas, opinions and convictions, the abolition of censorship, and free access to information and to use of the media.

#### **The Press**

Immediate measures will be taken to fix newspaper costs at a level below sales revenue.

In order to guarantee the continued existence of the Press and to encourage its development, there will be tax exemptions, subsidies for the purchase of newsprint, preferential distribution charges, and a fair sharing out of Government advertising.

All publications produced by employers' organisations and by finance, industrial or commercial companies, will be excluded from these benefits.

### **Part IV**

#### **WORKING FOR PEACE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

##### **Chapter 1: France's International Relations**

The Government's foreign policy, based upon

respect for the United Nations Charter, will follow the principles of: peaceful coexistence and co-operation between all countries, equal rights, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the peaceful solution of disputes, the active pursuit of disarmament, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and the refusal to resort to force or threats of force, including imposing a choice of alliances upon a country or installing or maintaining a political or social system contrary to the wishes of the majority of its people.

### **Chapter 2: Disarmament and National Defence**

General, universal and controlled disarmament will be the principal objective of the Government. For the duration of Parliament, it will base its defence and disarmament policy on the following principles:

(a) Renunciation of the nuclear strategic strike force in any form; the immediate ending by France of the manufacture of nuclear weapons; conversion of the military nuclear industry to peaceful purposes, according to a precise timetable and with proper safeguards for the interests of the workers concerned. In no case will the consequential problems of this conversion be allowed to serve as a pretext for maintaining the military nuclear industry.

(b) The immediate ending of nuclear tests, and accession to the nuclear test ban and non-dissemination treaties.

(c) Signature of the international treaties limiting and banning particular weapons. Initiatives to encourage the extension of these treaties. Active participation in the Geneva Conference as well as any other disarmament conference.

(d) The proposal of world negotiations leading to universal nuclear disarmament and to the controlled simultaneous reduction of armaments, armed forces and military budgets.

(e) The ending of all sales of arms and military equipment to colonialist, racist or fascist governments (South Africa, Portugal, Spain, Greece).

(f) Strict control of all sales of arms abroad.

As an instrument of national defence, the Army will not have to keep order at home or take part in colonialist or imperialist ventures abroad.

### **Chapter 3: European Security**

The Government will call for the simultaneous dissolution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

It will play an active part in preparing the conference for European security and co-operation in which all European States as well as the United States and Canada should participate.

The Government will not content itself with following events. It will declare its wish to lead France towards independence of all political-cum-

military blocs. The problems arising from the obligations imposed by France's membership of the Atlantic Alliance will be resolved in this spirit.

### **Chapter 4: France and the European Economic Community**

The Government will have a dual objective with regard to the EEC:

- on the one hand to join in developing the Community, its institutions and its common policies with the intention of freeing it from the domination of big business, of democratising its institutions, of supporting the demands of the workers and of making its decisions serve their interests;

- on the other hand, to preserve the Government's freedom of action within the framework of the Common Market in implementing its own political, economic and social programme.

At all events, the Government will retain the right to invoke the saving clauses provided for in the Treaty of Rome. It will exercise freely the right, which moreover is not restricted by the Treaty, to determine and extend the public sector of the economy on its own territory. It will reserve the right to determine and carry out its own national credit policy and to employ all other appropriate means to implement national democratic plans. It will be responsible before the National Assembly, as in all other aspects of its policy, for the decisions that the French Government representatives will take in the various bodies of the Community.

Democratisation of the economic and social committee implies a more just representation of the workers and an extension of the committee's powers. Fifty per cent of its members should be representatives of the trade unions, to be nominated by the national trade union organisations on a pro rata basis according to votes obtained by each of them. The other 50 per cent should be composed of representatives of other social categories and individuals nominated by the Governments. This committee should without exception be consulted by the Council of Ministers or the European Commission, in due time, on all projects which can have consequences for the workers or for the economy, and its members should receive all working documents of the Community.

The French representatives in the Assembly of the Community will be chosen in proportion to their party strength in the new Parliament.

### **Chapter 5: Present-day Conflicts**

The Government will direct its activity towards ending the war in Vietnam and in the whole of Indo-China. It will urge the total withdrawal of American forces and a political settlement—in the context of the Paris Conference—so that the right of the

peoples of Indo-China to decide their own future, without foreign interference, will be ensured and so that this part of the world will achieve peace and prosperity.

It will work for the re-establishment of peace and security in the Middle East in respect for the right of all States in the region, and notably the State of Israel, to exist and retain their sovereignty, and also in respect for the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs. It will base its activity to this end on the UN Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967.

The Government will call for the admission of both German States to the United Nations. It will establish new relations with the German Democratic Republic leading to official recognition of that State.

#### Chapter 6: Overseas Territories

The Government will recognise the right to self-

determination of the peoples of France's overseas territories.

#### Chapter 7: Co-operation and Aid for Economic Development

The Government will establish with all developing countries new relations of co-operation, which will be freely negotiated to exclude any kind of neo-colonialism or political strings. They will be based on free consent, respect for independence, non-interference in internal affairs and reciprocal benefits.

France will support those peoples who are still living under colonialism and struggling for their independence. She will put into effect the international decisions taken with regard to the colonialist and racist governments of South Africa and Rhodesia.

## Reply to John Lewis (Self Criticism)

Louis Althusser

*The following text is a reply to an article by John Lewis which appeared in two parts in the January and February issues of Marxism Today. The author has agreed to the addition of a small number of notes by the translator, Grahame Lock, designed to clarify certain points for British readers. The sub-titles are also by the translator. The author has seen the translation and notes.*

### Part I

#### I. NEVER FORGET THE CLASS STRUGGLE!

I want to thank *Marxism Today* for having published John Lewis' article about the books I have written on Marxist philosophy: *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*, which appeared in France in 1965. He took care to treat me in a special way, in the way a medical specialist treats a patient. The rest of the family, as it were, stood silent and still at the bedside, while Dr. Lewis leaned over to examine "the Althusser case".<sup>1</sup> He made his diagnosis. A very grave one: the patient is suffering from an attack of severe "dogmatism". The prognosis is equally grave: the patient has not long to last.

It is an honour for this attention to be paid to me. But it is also an opportunity for me to clear up certain matters, twelve years after the event. For my first article (reprinted in *For Marx*), which was concerned with the question of the "young Marx",

actually appeared in 1960, and I write in 1972.

#### Philosophy and Politics

A good deal of water has flowed under the bridge of history since 1960. The Workers' Movement has been touched by many important events. It has seen the Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (1966-69). It has seen the greatest workers' strike in world history—ten million French workers on strike for a month (May 1968), as well as the important ideological revolt among French students and petty-bourgeois intellectuals which "preceded" and "accompanied" it. It has seen the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact nations. It has seen the war in Ireland, & c. The Cultural Revolution and May 1968 have had ideological and political repercussions in the whole capitalist world.

With hindsight one can judge things better. With the passing of the period between the writing of the pieces collected in my books and the present time—twelve, ten, seven years—one can look back and see more clearly whether one was right or wrong.

<sup>1</sup> The title of John Lewis' article was *The Althusser Case*. And in his conclusion, the author compares Marxism to . . . medicine.

It is really an excellent opportunity.

Just one small point in this connection. John Lewis, in his article, never for one moment talks about this political history of the Workers' Movement. In *For Marx*—that is, in 1965—I was already writing about Stalin, about the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and about the split in the International Communist Movement. John Lewis, on the other hand, writes as if Stalin had never existed, as if the Twentieth Congress and the split in the International Communist Movement had never occurred, as if the Proletarian Cultural Revolution had never taken place, nor the occupation of Czechoslovakia, nor the war in Ireland, & c. John Lewis is a pure spirit, he prefers not to talk about such concrete things as politics.

When he talks about philosophy, he talks about philosophy. Just that. Full stop.

It has to be said that this is precisely what the majority of so-called philosophy teachers do in our bourgeois society. The last thing they want to talk about is politics! They would rather talk about philosophy. Full stop. That is just why Lenin, quoting Dietzgen, called them "graduated flunkies" of the bourgeois state<sup>2</sup>. What a wretched sight they make! For all the great philosophers in history, since the time of Plato, even the great bourgeois philosophers—not only the materialists but even idealists like Hegel—have talked about politics. They more or less recognised that to do philosophy was to do politics in the field of theory. And they had the courage to do their politics openly, *to talk about politics*.

Heaven be thanked, John Lewis has changed all that. John Lewis is a Marxist and we are in 1972. He does not feel the need to talk about politics. Let someone work that one out.

But to *Marxism Today* I must express my thanks for giving an important place to a discussion about philosophy. It is quite correct to give it this important place. The point has been made not only by Engels and of course by Lenin, but by Stalin himself! And, as we know, it has also been made by Gramsci and by Mao: the working class *needs philosophy* in the class struggle. They need not only the Marxist *science* of history (historical materialism), but also Marxist philosophy (dialectical materialism). Why?

I should like to reply by using a formula. I will take the (personal) risk of putting it this way: the reason is that *philosophy is, in the last instance*,<sup>3</sup> *class struggle in the field of theory*.

All this is perfectly orthodox. Engels, whom Lenin quotes on this point in *What is to be Done?*, wrote in 1874 in a supplement to his Preface to

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, in *Collected Works*, Moscow 1962, vol. 14, p. 340. (Translator's note)

*The Peasant War* that there are three forms of the class struggle. The class struggle has not only an economic form and a political form *but also* a theoretical form. Or if you prefer: the same class struggle exists and must be fought out by the proletariat in the economic field, in the political field and in the theoretical field. When it is fought out in the theoretical field, the class struggle is called *philosophy*.

Now some people will say that all this is nothing but words. But that is not true. These words are *weapons* in the class struggle in the field of theory, and since this is part of the class struggle as a whole, and since the highest level of the class struggle is the *political* class struggle, it follows that these words which are used in philosophy are weapons in the *political* struggle.

Lenin wrote that "politics is economics in a concentrated form". We can now add that philosophy is politics in a concentrated form.<sup>4</sup> This is a

<sup>3</sup> One must always add: *in the last instance*, so as not to be misunderstood. I will explain in another place why it is necessary to be precise in this way, not simply to say that philosophy is class struggle in the field of theory, but to add that it is *in the last instance* that this is the case.

<sup>4</sup> See note 3. Althusser's formulae may be compared with a number of propositions he put forward on the same question in 1969, in the article "Lenin before Hegel" (*Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 103-120):

"1. Philosophy is not a science, and it has no object, in the sense in which a science has an object.

"2. Philosophy is a *practice* of political *intervention* carried out in a theoretical form.

"3. It intervenes essentially in two privileged domains, the political domain of the effects of the class struggle and the theoretical domain of the effects of scientific practice.

"4. In its essence, it is itself produced in the theoretical domain by the conjunction of the effects of the class struggle and the effects of scientific practice.

"5. It therefore intervenes politically, in a theoretical form, in the two domains, that of political practice and that of scientific practice: these two domains of intervention being *its* domains, insofar as it is itself produced by the combination of effects from these two practices.

"6. All philosophy expresses a class position, a 'partisanship' in the great debate which dominates the whole history of philosophy, the debate between idealism and materialism.

"7. The Marxist-Leninist revolution in philosophy consists of a rejection of the idealist conception of philosophy (philosophy as an 'interpretation of the world') which denies that philosophy expresses a class position, although it always does so itself, and the adoption of the proletarian class position in philosophy, which is materialist, i.e. the inauguration of a new materialist and revolutionary practice of philosophy which induces effects of class division in theory.

"All these Theses can be found in *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (by Lenin). All I have done is to begin to make them more explicit". (Translator's note)

“schematic” formula. No matter! It expresses its meaning quite well.

Everything that happens in philosophy has, in the last instance, not only political consequences in philosophy, but also political consequences *in politics*: in the political class struggle.

We will show in a moment why that is so.

Of course, since I cite Engels and Lenin in support of my point, John Lewis will surely say, once again, that I am talking like “the last champion of an orthodoxy in grave difficulties”. O.K.! I am the defender of orthodoxy, of that “orthodoxy” which is called the theory of Marx and Lenin. Is this orthodoxy in “grave difficulties”? Yes, it is and has been since it came to birth. And these grave difficulties are the difficulties posed by the threat of bourgeois ideology. John Lewis says that I am “crying in the wilderness”. Is that so? No, it is not!

For Communists, when they are Marxists, and Marxists when they are Communists, *never* cry in the wilderness. Even when they are alone.

Why is that? We shall see.

I therefore take my stand on this theoretical basis of Marxism—a basis which is “orthodox” precisely in so far as it is in conformity with the theory of Marx and Lenin. And it is on this basis that I want to take issue both with John Lewis and with my own past errors, on the basis of the need to carry on the class struggle in the field of theory, as Engels and Lenin argued, and on the basis of the definition of philosophy which I have proposed in this article: *philosophy is, in the last instance, class struggle in the field of theory*.

I will therefore leave aside all the rather imprudent remarks, some of them “psychological”, which John Lewis thought it useful to make at the end of his article, about Althusser’s “*whole style of life and writing*”. John Lewis is for example very worried, very put out, quite upset—good “humanist” that he is—by the fact that Althusser “argues exhaustively and with an extreme dogmatism”, in a way which makes him think not so much of the Scholastics, who were great philosophers of the Middle Ages, but of the *schoolmen*, commentators of commentators, erudite splitters of philosophical hairs, who could not rise above the level of quotation. Thank you! But really, this kind of argument has no place in a debate between Communists in the journal of a Communist Party. I will not follow John Lewis onto this ground.

I approach John Lewis as a comrade, as a militant of a fraternal party: the Communist Party of Great Britain. In the face of the history of the Workers’ Movement, in the face of the theoretical and practical work of Marx and of Lenin, all Communist Parties are equal, in virtue of proletarian internationalism. And all their militants are equal.

I will try to speak plainly and clearly, in a way that

can be understood by all such militants.

So as not to make my reply too long, I will only take up those theoretical questions which are most important, politically speaking, for us today, in 1972.

## II. WHAT WORRIES JOHN LEWIS?

To understand my reply, the reader must obviously know what John Lewis, in his “radical” critique of my “philosophical writings”, essentially holds against me.

In a few words, we can sum this up as follows.

John Lewis holds:

1. that I do not understand Marx’s *philosophy*;

2. that I do not understand the history of the *formation* of Marx’s thought.

In short, his reproach is that I do not understand *Marxist theory*.

That is his right.

I will consider these two points in succession.

## III.

First point: *Althusser does not understand Marx’s philosophy*.

To demonstrate this point, John Lewis employs a very simple method. First he sets out Marx’s *real* philosophy, which is Marx as he understands him. Then, beside this, he puts Althusser’s interpretation. You just have to compare them, it seems, to see the difference!

Well, let us follow our guide to Marxist philosophy and see how John Lewis sums up his own view of Marx. He does it in three formulae, which I will call three *Theses*.<sup>5</sup>

### How John Lewis sees Marx

1. *Thesis no. 1. It is man who makes history.*

John Lewis’ *proof*: no need of proof, since it is obvious, it is quite evident, everyone knows it.

John Lewis’ *example*: revolution. Man makes revolution.

2. *Thesis no. 2. Man makes history by remaking existing history*, by “transcendence”, by the “negation of the negation” of existing history.

John Lewis’ *proof*: since it is man who makes history, it follows that in order to make history man must transform the history which he has already made (since it is man who has made history). To transform what one has already made is to “transcend” it, to negate what exists. And since what exists is the history which man has already made, it is already negated history. To make history is

<sup>5</sup> In a *Philosophy Course for Scientists* (given in 1967 and to be published) I proposed the following definition: “Philosophy states propositions which are *Theses*”. It therefore differs from the sciences: “a science states propositions which are *Demonstrations*”.

therefore "to negate the negation", and so on without end.

John Lewis' *example*: revolution. To make revolution, man "transcends" ("negates") existing history, itself the "negation" of the history which preceded it.

3. *Thesis no. 3. Man only knows what he himself does.*<sup>6</sup>

John Lewis' *proof*: no proof, probably because of lack of space. So let us work one out for him. He could have taken the case of science and said that the scientist "only knows what he himself does" because he is the one who has to work out his proof, either by experiment or by demonstration (mathematics).

John Lewis' *example*: no example. So let us provide one. John Lewis could have taken *history* as an example: man's knowledge of history comes from the fact that he is the one who makes it. This is like the Thesis of Giambattista Vico: *verum factum*.<sup>7</sup>

#### A little Difficulty for John Lewis

These then are the three Theses which sum up John Lewis' idea of Marx's philosophy:

*Thesis no. 1*: It is man who makes history.

*Thesis no. 2*: Man makes history by transcending history.

*Thesis no. 3*: Man only knows what he himself does.

This is all very simple. Everyone "understands" the words involved: *man, make, history, know*. There is only one word which is a bit complicated, a "philosopher's" word: "transcendence", or "negation of the negation". But if he wanted to, John Lewis could say the same thing more simply. Instead of saying: *man makes history, in transcending it, by the "negation of the negation"*, he could say that man makes history by "transforming" it, &c. Wouldn't that be more simple?

But a little difficulty still remains. When John Lewis says that it is man who makes history, everyone understands. Or rather, everyone thinks he

understands. But when it is a question of going further, when John Lewis honestly asks himself the question: "*what* is it that man *does* when he makes history?", then you realize that a nasty problem appears just when everything seemed simple, that there is a nasty obscurity just in the place where everything seemed clear.

What was obscure? The little word *make*, in the Thesis "it is man who makes history". What can this little word *make* possibly mean, when we are talking about *history*? Because when you say: "I made a mistake" or "I made a trip around the world", or when a carpenter says: "I made a table", &c., everyone knows what the term "*make*" means. The sense of the word changes according to the expression, but in each case we can easily explain what it means.

For example, when a carpenter "makes" a table, that means he *constructs* it. But to *make* history? What can that mean? And the *man* who makes history, do you know that individual, that "species of individual", as Hegel used to say?

So John Lewis sets to work. He does not try to avoid the problem: he confronts it. And he explains the thing. He tells us: to "make", in the case of history, that means to "transcend" (negation of the negation), that means to transform the raw material of existing history by going beyond it. So far, so good.

But the carpenter who "makes" a table, he has a "raw material" in front of him too: the wood. And he transforms the wood into a table. But John Lewis would never say that the carpenter "transcends" the wood in order to "make" a table out of it. And he is right. For if he said that, the first carpenter who came along, and all the other carpenters and all the other working people in the world would send him packing with his "transcendence." John Lewis uses the term "transcendence" (negation of the negation) *only* for history. Why? We have to work out the answer, for John Lewis himself does not provide any explanation.

In my opinion, John Lewis holds on to his "transcendence" for the following reason: because the raw material of history *is already history*. The carpenter's raw material is *wood*. But the carpenter who "makes" the table would never say that *he was the one who "made"* the wood, because he knows very well that it is nature which produces the wood. Before a tree can be cut up and sold off as planks, it first has to have grown somewhere in the forest, either in the same country or thousands of miles away on the other side of the equator.

Now, for John Lewis it is man who *has made* the history with which *he makes* history. In history man produces everything: it is not only the result, the product of his "labour", which is history: so is the *raw material* that he transforms. Aristotle said that

<sup>6</sup> See Part I of John Lewis' article, p. 46. Lewis writes that Marx "does not present us with any system. Had he thought one necessary he would certainly have constructed one. What he has in mind is the development of consciousness, of understanding, of the possibilities, the problems, the opportunities and necessities in the actual social situation. This Marx calls *praxis*, because it is always concrete, always we are involved and acting, and therefore thinking as we act, and acting as we think." (Translator's note).

<sup>7</sup> *Verum factum*: "that which is true is that which has been done". Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) was an Italian philosopher of history, famous for his "new science of humanity". He claimed that we can know the social world precisely because it is we who have made it. He wrote the *Scienza nuova*. (Translator's note)

man is a two-legged, reasoning, speaking, political animal. Franklin, quoted by Marx in *Capital*, said that man is a "toolmaking animal". John Lewis is a philosopher of quite another class from Aristotle or Marx. John Lewis says that man is not only a tool-making animal, but an animal who makes history, in the strong sense, because he *makes everything*. He "makes" the raw material. He makes the instruments of production (John Lewis says nothing about these—and for good reason! Because otherwise he would have to talk about the class struggle, and his "man who makes history" would disappear in one flash, together with the whole system). And he makes the final product: history.

### A Little Human God

Do you know of any being under the sun endowed with such a power? Yes—there does exist such a being in the tradition of human culture: *God*. Only God "makes" the raw material with which he "makes" the world. But there is a very important difference. John Lewis' God is not *outside* of history: he is *inside*. And it is just because John Lewis' little human god—man—is *inside* history ("*en situation*"), as our good Jean-Paul Sartre used to say) that Lewis does not endow him with a power of absolute creation (when one creates everything, it is relatively easy: there are no constraints!) but something even more stupefying—the power of "transcendence", of being able indefinitely to *supersede* the history *in which* he lives, the power to transcend history by his human liberty.<sup>8</sup>

John Lewis' *man* is a little lay god. Like every living being he is "up to his neck" in reality, but endowed with the prodigious power of being able at any moment to step outside of that reality, of being able to change its character. A little Sartrian god, always "*en situation*" in history, endowed with the amazing power of "transcending" every situation, of resolving all the difficulties which history presents, and of going forward towards the golden future of the human, socialist revolution: man is a *free* animal.

Please excuse all this if you are not a philosopher. We philosophers are well acquainted with this kind of argument. And we Communist philosophers know that this old line in philosophy has always had its political consequences.

The first people who talked about "transcendence" in philosophy were the idealist-religious philosophers of Plato's school: the Platonic and neo-Platonic

philosophers. They had an urgent need of the category of "transcendence" in order to be able to construct their philosophical or religious theology, and this theology was then the official philosophy of the *slave* state. No need to say more. Later, in the Middle Ages, the Augustinian and Thomist theologians took up the same category again and used it in systems whose function was to serve the interests of the Church and feudal state (the ideological state apparatus of the Church is the number one ideological state apparatus of the feudal state). No need to say more.

Much later, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, the notion of "transcendence" received, in Hegelian philosophy, a new function: the same category, but "wrapped" in the veil of the "negation of the negation". This time it served the bourgeois state. It was quite simply the *philosophical name* for *bourgeois liberty*. It was then revolutionary in relation to the philosophical systems of feudal "transcendence". But it was *one hundred per cent bourgeois*, and that is the way it stays.

Since that time, Jean-Paul Sartre has taken up the same idea once more, in his theory of man "*en situation*": the *petty-bourgeois* version of *bourgeois liberty*. And Sartre is not alone, for transcendence has flourished even since his early days, among for example large numbers of theologians, both reactionary and avant-garde, and even among the "red" theologians of Germany and Holland, of Spain and Latin America. The bourgeois no longer needs to believe—and anyway has for thirty years *no longer been able* to believe—that his liberty is all-embracing. But the petty-bourgeois intellectual, yes! The more *his* liberty is crushed and denied by the development of imperialism, the more he exalts its power ("transcendence", "negation of the negation"). The "conscious" petty-bourgeois exists in his perfect form only when he *protests*. The petty-bourgeois ideologist is an animal of protest!

John Lewis now, in 1972, takes up the old arguments in his turn, in the theoretical journal of the British Communist Party. He can, if I may say so, rest assured: he is certainly not crying in the wilderness! He is not the only person to take up this theme. He is in the company of many Communists.<sup>9</sup> Everyone knows that. But why should it be that since the nineteen-sixties it has been so easy to find Communists eager to resurrect this worn-out philosophy of petty-bourgeois liberty and yet still claiming to be *Marxists*?

We shall see.

<sup>8</sup> I do not know John Lewis' personal philosophical history. But I am not sticking my neck out much in betting that he has a weakness for Jean-Paul Sartre. His Marxism in fact bears a remarkable resemblance to a (pale) copy of Sartrian existentialism, in a slightly Hegelianised version, which no doubt makes it more easily acceptable to Communist readers.

<sup>9</sup> Althusser is of course not only or even specially referring to the British Communist Party. His argument is that the struggle between the positions he outlines is taking place or must take place wherever what he calls *bourgeois* and *petty-bourgeois* Theses have penetrated Marxism. (Translator's note)

#### IV. WHAT DOES MARXISM SAY ABOUT HISTORY?

But first, I shall do like John Lewis. I shall compare John Lewis' "Marxist" Theses with the Theses of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. And everyone will be able to see the difference and judge.

I will go over the points in John Lewis' order. That way things will be clearer. I am making an enormous concession to John Lewis by taking his order, because his order is idealist. But we will do him the favour.

To understand what follows, note that in the case of each Thesis (1,2,3) I begin by repeating Lewis' Thesis and then state the Marxist-Leninist Thesis.

##### 1. Thesis no. 1.

*John Lewis: It is man who makes history.*

*Marxism-Leninism: It is the masses which make history.*

What are these *masses* which "make history"? In a class society they are the *exploited* masses, that is, the exploited social classes, social strata and social categories, grouped around the exploited class *capable* of uniting them in a movement against the dominant class which holds state power.

The exploited class capable of doing this is not always the *most exploited* class, or the *most wretched* social "stratum".

In Antiquity, for example, it was not the slaves (except in a few periods—Spartacus) who "made" history in the strong, political sense of the term, but the most exploited classes among the "free" men (at Rome, the urban or rural "plebs").<sup>10</sup>

In the same way, under capitalism the "lumpen-proletariat", as Marx called it, groups together the most wretched of men. But it is not a class, and certainly not *the class which is exploited* in capitalist production: that is, the proletariat. It is around the *proletariat* that you will find grouped the masses who "make history", who are going to "make history"—that is, who are going to make the revolution which will break out in the "weakest link" of the world imperialist chain.

Against John Lewis' Thesis—it is man who makes history—Marxism-Leninism has always opposed the Thesis: it is the masses which make history. Under capitalism, the masses can be defined as the set of exploited *classes*, strata and categories grouped around the exploited class *in large-scale production*, around the only class capable of directing their action against the bourgeois state. Compare the two Theses.

<sup>10</sup> It is not certain—here I shall have to bow to the judgement of Marxist historians—that the slave class did not, in spite of everything, quietly but genuinely "make history". The transition from the small-property slave system to the large-scale system at Rome had its historical effects.

##### 2. Thesis no. 2.

*John Lewis: Man makes history by "transcending" history.*

*Marxism-Leninism: The class struggle is the motor of history* (Thesis of the *Communist Manifesto*, 1847).

Here things become extremely interesting. Because Marxism-Leninism blows up John Lewis' whole philosophical system. How?

John Lewis has said: it is man who makes history. To which Marxism-Leninism replied: it is the *masses*.

But if we went no further, we would give the impression that Marxism-Leninism gives a *different* reply to the *same* question. That question being: *who makes history*? This question therefore supposes that history is the result of the action of a *subject*, of what that subject does. For John Lewis, the subject is man. For Marxism-Leninism, the subject would be the masses.

Yes and no. When we started to sketch out a definition of the masses, when we argued about this idea of the masses, we saw that the whole thing was rather complicated. The masses are actually *several* social classes, social strata and social categories grouped together in a way which is both complex and *changing* (the positions of the different classes and strata, and of course the fractions of classes within the classes, *change* in the course of the revolutionary process itself). And we are dealing with huge numbers: in France and Britain, for example, with millions of people, in China with hundreds of millions! Can anyone still claim that we are talking about a "*subject*"? Compared with John Lewis' "subject", as simple and neat as you can imagine, the masses, considered as a "subject", pose nasty problems of identity and identification. A subject is a being about which we can say: "that's it!" How do we do that when the masses are supposed to be the "subject"?

It is precisely the Thesis of the *Communist Manifesto*—"the class struggle is the motor of history"—that brings this problem into the open, which shows us how to pose it properly and therefore how to solve it.

It is the masses which "make" history, but "it is the class struggle which is the motor of history". To John Lewis' question: "how does man make history?", Marxism-Leninism replies by replacing his idealist philosophical categories with categories of a quite different kind.

The question is no longer posed in terms of "*man*". That much we know. But in the proposition that "the class struggle is the *motor* of history", the question of "making" history is also eliminated. It is no longer, that is, a question of looking for a "subject" of history. It is no longer a question of *who* makes history.

Marxism-Leninism, then tells us something quite different: that it is the *class struggle* (new concept)

which is the *motor* (new concept) of history, it is the class struggle which moves history, which advances it. This Thesis is of very great importance, because it puts the class struggle in the front rank.

### Absolute Primacy of the Class Struggle

In the preceding Thesis: "it is the masses which make history", the accent was put (1) on the exploited classes grouped around the class capable of uniting them, and (2) on their power to carry through a revolutionary transformation of history. It was therefore the masses which were put in the front rank.

In the Thesis taken from the *Communist Manifesto*, what is put in the front rank is no longer the exploited classes, &c., but the *class struggle*. This Thesis is decisive for Marxism-Leninism. It draws a radical demarcation line between revolutionaries and reformists.

For the reformists (even if they call themselves Marxists) it is not the class struggle which is in the front rank: it is the classes. Let us take a simple example, and suppose that we are dealing with just two classes. For the reformists these classes exist *before* the class struggle, a bit like two football teams exist, separately, before the match. Each class exists in its own camp, lives according to its particular conditions of existence. One class may be exploiting another, but for reformism that is not the same thing as class struggle. One day the two classes come up against one another and come into conflict. They begin a hand-to-hand battle, the battle becomes acute, and finally the exploited class defeats its enemy. That is revolution. However you turn the thing around, you will always find the same idea here: the classes exist *before* the class struggle, *independently* of the class struggle. The class struggle exists only *afterwards*.

*Revolutionaries*, on the other hand, consider that it is impossible to separate the classes from class struggle. The class struggle and the existence of classes are one and the same thing. In order for there to be classes in a "society", the society has to be *divided* into classes: this division is the exploitation of one class by another. It is therefore the class struggle, for exploitation is already class struggle. You must therefore begin with the class struggle if you want to understand class division and the classes. *The class struggle must be put in the front rank.*

But that means that our Thesis 1 (*it is the masses which make history*) must be explained in terms of Thesis 2 (*the class struggle is the motor of history*). That means that the revolutionary power of the masses comes from the *class struggle*. And that means that it is not enough, if you want to understand what is happening in the world, just to look at the exploited classes. You also have to look at

the exploiting classes. Better, you have to go beyond the football match idea, the idea of two antagonistic groups of classes, to examine the basis of the existence *not only* of classes but also of the antagonism between classes: that is, the *class struggle*. Absolute primacy of the class struggle (Marx, Lenin). Never forget the class struggle (Mao).

Now the class struggle does not go on in the air, or on something like a football pitch. It is rooted in the mode of production and exploitation in a given class society. You therefore have to consider the *material basis* of the class struggle, that is, the material existence of the class struggle. It is the unity of the relations of production and the productive forces of a given mode of production, in a concrete historical social formation, which is at the same time the "basis" (Marx) of the class struggle and its material existence. It is this profound truth which Marxism-Leninism expresses in the well-known Thesis of class struggle in the infrastructure, in the economy, in class exploitation, and in the Thesis that all the forms of the class struggle are rooted in economic class struggle.

When that is clear, the question of the "subject" of history disappears. History is an immense *natural-human* system in movement, and the motor of history is class struggle. History is a process, and a *process without a subject*.<sup>11</sup>

The question about how "*man makes history*" disappears altogether. Marxist theory leaves it to bourgeois ideology.

And with it disappears the "necessity" of the concept of "transcendence" and its subject, man.

That does not mean that "men", the individuals, disappear. For social classes are made up of human individuals. But these classes are certainly not just all those individuals "added together". They have *material* conditions of existence. Nor does it mean that the question of political *action* disappears: for the class struggle, in the last instance, is *practical*, which means that it is a struggle of the organised masses for the conquest and retention of state power. Nor does it mean that the question of the revolutionary party disappears, because without such a party the conquest of state power by the exploited masses under the leadership of the proletariat is impossible.

But it does mean that the "role of the individual in history", the existence, nature, objectives and practice of the revolutionary party are not determined by "transcendence", that is, by the free will of "man". They are determined by the class struggle, by the state of the Workers' Movement, by the ideology of this movement (petty-bourgeois or proletarian), by its forms of organisation and its

<sup>11</sup> This idea I put forward in a brief study called "On the Relation of Marx to Hegel" (February 1968).

relation to the scientific theory of the class struggle, Marxist theory. All Communists know that.

### 3. Thesis No. 3

*John Lewis: Man only knows what he himself does. Marxism-Leninism: One can only know what exists.*

A big difference! For John Lewis man only knows what he himself "does". For dialectical materialism, the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, one can only know what *exists*. That is the basic materialist Thesis: the primacy of being over thought.

That is where we have to begin in philosophy.

### Materialism and Science

This Thesis is at one and the same time a Thesis about existence, about materiality and about objectivity. It means not only that one can only know what *exists*, but also that what exists is both "*material*"—that is, distinct from the "*mental*" character of the thought by which it is known—and *objective*—that is, exists independently of the subjectivity which knows it.

That of course does not mean that Marxist philosophy denies the activity of thought, that it denies practical scientific work, the work of experiment in the natural sciences or the work of historical experiment represented by political work (for Marxists, the proletarian class struggle). On the contrary! Marx and Lenin even said that certain idealist philosophers (Hegel, for example) had understood the principle of this activity better than certain materialist philosophers. That is how we "get into" the *dialectical* Theses of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. *But*—and here it differs fundamentally from John Lewis—Marxism-Leninism has always *subordinated the dialectical Theses to the materialist Theses*. It is thanks to scientific work that we can know what exists. But we only ever have knowledge of what *exists*. Knowing something is not the same as "making" or "doing" it.

As far as nature is concerned, there is no problem. Who would argue that it was man who "made" the nature which he comes to know! Only idealists, or rather only that crazy species of idealists who attribute God's omnipotence to man. Even idealists are not normally so stupid.

But what about history? We know that the Thesis: "it is man who makes history" has, literally, no meaning. But a trace of it remains in the idea that history is *easier* to understand than nature because it is "human". That is the idea of Giambattista Vico.

Well, Marxism-Leninism is categorical on this point. History is as difficult to understand as nature. Or, rather, it is even more difficult to understand. Why? Because "men" always think they understand it, because each ruling and exploiting class offers them "its" explanation of history—in the form of its own dominant ideology, which serves its class

interests and keeps "men" under its heel.

Look at the Middle Ages. The Church offered all its flock—that is to say, primarily the exploited masses—a very simple and clear explanation of history. History is made by God, and obeys the laws or follows the ends of Providence.

Look at the eighteenth century in France. The situation is different: the bourgeoisie is not yet in power, it is critical and revolutionary. And it offers to everyone (without distinction of class, not only to the bourgeoisie itself and its allies but also to the people it exploits) an "enlightened" explanation of history: history is moved by Reason, and it obeys the laws or follows the ends of Truth, Reason and Liberty.

If history is difficult to understand scientifically, it is because *between* real history and men there always come a *class-ideological explanation of history*, a *class philosophy of history* in which the masses spontaneously believe. Why? Because this ideology is pumped into them by the ruling or ascending class, and serves class exploitation. In the eighteenth century the bourgeoisie is already an exploiting class.

To succeed in piercing this ideological and idealist "smokescreen" of the ruling classes, the special circumstances of the first half of the nineteenth century were required: the class struggles following the French Revolution, the first proletarian class struggles, *plus* English political economy, *plus* French socialism. The result of these circumstances was Marx's discovery. He was the first to open up the "continent" of history to scientific knowledge.

But in history, as in nature, man only knows what *exists*. There is no automatic relation between what he knows and what he "does". The fact that, in order to get to know what really does exist, an enormous amount of scientific work and gigantic practical struggles were necessary, does not disprove the point. One can only know what *exists*.

But we must go further. You will notice that I said that the Marxist-Leninist Thesis is not *Man* can only know "what exists", but: "one can only know what exists". Here too the term "man" has disappeared. We should say in this respect that scientific history, like all history, is a "*process without a subject*", and that scientific knowledge, even when it is the work of a particular individual scientist, is actually the result of a complex process which has no real subject or goal. That is how it is with Marxist science. It was Marx who "discovered" it, but as the result of a complex process, combining German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism, the whole thing based on the struggles between the bourgeoisie and working class. All Communists know that.

Scientists, in general, do not know it. But if they

are prepared to, Communists can help to persuade scientists (including natural scientists, including mathematicians) of its truth. Because all scientific knowledge really is the result of a process without any subject or goal. This is undoubtedly a Thesis which is difficult to understand. But it gives a very important insight, not only into scientific work but also into the political struggle.

Yes, it has both scientific and political consequences.

You will remember the definition of philosophy which I proposed: philosophy is, in the last instance, class struggle in the field of theory.

If philosophy is *class struggle* in the field of

theory, it is political. And it has political effects. But if it is class struggle in the field of *theory*, it has theoretical effects, both in the sciences and in certain ideologies. It also of course has effects in all the other fields of human activity, from the "struggle for production" (Mao) to art, etc.

But I cannot deal with everything here. I will just say that, as class struggle in the field of theory, philosophy has two main effects: in politics *and* in the sciences, in political practice *and* in scientific practice. All Communists know that, or ought to know it, because Marxism-Leninism has never ceased to repeat it and to argue for it.

(*Part II will appear in the November issue*).

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## Discussion Contribution on:

# Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Bert Ramelson

Bill Warren is entitled to be critical of *The British Road to Socialism*. But as a persistent critic over the years it is really high time that he confined his criticism to what is contained in the BRS and not to Aunt Sallies—the creation of his own highly imaginative interpretation of what the BRS means.

If he is to lay any claims to being a Marxist it is also high time that he starts with objective reality in drawing his conclusions and does not distort facts to fit his own preconceived conclusions. It would also help if he used the same criteria for the testing of the credibility and viability of all concepts, not use certain yardsticks when it suits him and discard them when it doesn't.

He starts his criticism with what he apparently considers the most powerful argument, namely the lack of success by our party in the electoral field.

This argument is not only shallow and superficial but, presumably because it doesn't suit his case, Bill Warren fails to apply this criterion on a world scale.

If the test of the correctness of our strategy is electoral gains, and as Warren throughout his criticism of the BRS argues the case on a world scale or at least as a misconceived and "reformist strategy" in the industrially developed countries, then presumably the electoral gains in France, Italy and Japan by the Communist Parties in those countries adopting a similar strategy must be proof

positive of the correctness of this strategy.

Nor is there any shortage of "leftist groups" who are critical of the BRS for the same reason as Bill Warren in all industrially developed countries including Britain. Some of them participate in elections to governmental institutions and all in elections within the trade union movement.

As their votes to governmental representative bodies are even more "miserable" than ours, and whereas we considerably increased our support within the trade union movement, the anti-BRS strategists are almost entirely ignored by the workers in elections whether it is for lay officials such as shop stewards or full time officials, then presumably, by the same token, Bill Warren's strategy must be false.

No Marxist would, of course, consider the test of the correctness of a strategy the rapidity with which the masses accept it and follow it. If that were the test then social democratic strategy and opportunism would seem to be the correct strategy, for over the years they certainly succeeded in winning considerable followings in the advanced industrial countries. Equally, if that were the criterion, Marxist strategy (even if you excluded the 20 years since the BRS was published) must be wrong for it has been advocated for nearly a century and by communist parties for 30 years between 1920 and 1950.

Merely to state these facts is to show how absurd a test it is.

But then to add, as Bill Warren does “. . . so that continued failure of the working class to follow Communist leadership must necessarily imply that the central link of the entire strategic chain is missing” shows either his total ignorance of what has been happening in the labour movement, or a wilful blindness to events which prove his “preconceived theory” wrong.

Not only have large numbers of workers elected Communists and their allies to key positions both lay and full time in the trade unions, but many of the policies Communists have been advocating have been adopted by a majority of the trade unions and by the Trades Union Congress itself. That goes for foreign as well as for home policy including the rejection of “incomes policy”, of which until recently Bill Warren was a fervent supporter.

Has Bill Warren heard of the successful struggle of the UCS under the leadership of Communists, and that literally hundreds of thousands of workers have followed the example in a revolutionary transformed fight for the “right to work”, to use but one example?

### **Confrontation with the State**

Far from the BRS and our Party wishing to “shrink from the necessity, of a clash with the state machine” as is hinted by Bill Warren, it was our Party at its last Congress that agitated for, and has since helped to bring about a confrontation with the State and its institutions. It was our Party’s strategy for the need to win allies and combine extra-parliamentary with parliamentary struggle—the kernel of the BRS—that brought about the sort of confrontation that compelled the State to release the Pentonville Five when faced by an escalating general strike from below which compelled the General Council to call an official 1-day General Strike. It is possible that Bill Warren is the only person in Britain who is not aware that a key figure in this—Bernie Steer—is a Communist and that this strategy was outlined by our EC two years ago and called for on June 10 by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions—a body continuously criticised by the anti-BRS groups as reformist but fortunately containing experienced Communists on its leading body.

Of course the strikes against the Industrial Relations Act are political, as in a sense every wage strike against a Government-imposed norm is political. But it also has its economic side. Which side is stressed at a given time depends on many circumstances, an important factor of which is what will move workers into action. For it is when workers are in action that they quickly draw political conclusions—much more quickly than from what may

appear to them abstract slogans.

It is this same Hugh Scanlon, the “left” Bill Warren sneers at, who was the first trade union leader to win his union, the AUEW, to decide on a national strike of its 1½ million workers against the State’s imprisonment of the Pentonville Five and who successfully moved the General Strike resolution in the General Council.

Without allies like him the Socialist revolution in Britain will remain an empty slogan.

How can one explain Bill Warren’s further gem:

“. . . despite all this, there has been no shift to the left within the Labour Party. If trade-unionists have increasingly elected left-wingers, this is only to a minor extent the result of Communist Party strategy (or activity). It remains in any case an ‘economist’ phenomenon, and above all reflects the profound social forces stimulated and released by the continuing inflation of postwar capitalism. If there had been no Communist Party, workers would still be electing militants in the trade unions and on the shop-floor and their *political* attitudes would be unchanged. It is a measure of the Communist strategy that insofar as it has had success, it has been in organising workers on purely economic issues without any significant political content.”

I suggest it can only be explained by his desperation to prove the BRS wrong, and if to do that means ignoring the facts and throwing Marxism overboard, well so much the worse for the facts and Marxism.

To say that the Labour Party has not moved sufficiently to the left or that insufficient changes in the leadership of the Labour Party have taken place is one thing, but to say that the Labour Party hasn’t moved to the left boggles the imagination.

Is Bill Warren aware that the Labour Party Conference and EC, and, as a consequence, the Parliamentary Labour Party, has voted against the Industrial Relations Act, against the present proposals for entry to the EEC, against the Housing Finance Bill, is pledged to unconditional repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, has changed its policy on Vietnam and supported the UCS? It’s far from a revolutionary position, but to fail to see it as a shift to the left and above all the forces and the movement which brought it about, shows Bill Warren’s total inability to understand the strategy of the BRS.

### **Spontaneity**

The logic of his remarks that the only changes in the trade union movement are of an economic character and would have taken place without the Communists is that there really is no need for an organised revolutionary party, and is in line with the theory of “spontaneity” advocated by those on the left incapable of founding a stable, disciplined Marxist organisation and not all that far from

Enoch Powell's anti-trade union argument that the present level of wages is not due to militancy or trade unionism but the state of the labour market, and would have been the same if there had been no trade unions at all. To say nothing of the contradiction to his own argument earlier when it suited him, that the actions against the Industrial Relations Act were *political* and not economic.

Then there is the Aunt Sally that the BRS deviates from Lenin's concept of the need to smash the bourgeois State and replace it by a working class state, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The BRS makes it abundantly clear that the state that will be created will be a fundamentally different state from the bourgeois state. Surely the "smashing" of the bourgeois state was never intended by Lenin to be the literal smashing of bricks and mortar, or even all the institutions. A representative of the working class as Chief Constable as well as his main colleagues coming from the same class, even if they occupy the same skyscraper which houses Scotland Yard, is a smashing of the State.

Working class judges and Army officers replacing the present personnel is a smashing of the bourgeois State—though the institutions of the police, judiciary and army are retained but are now instruments of the working class and their allies instead of the property-owning class.

All this is spelled out in plain English in BRS—so the continuous return to the suggestion that somehow the BRS deviates from Lenin's concept of the role of the State is hard to explain.

Then there is his criticism that it is wrong in an advanced country to lay too much stress on the fight for democracy and the importance of Parliament as the "highest form of representative power".

This is really the Achilles Heel of the critics of the BRS. It is their failure to understand the nature of democracy and the role it occupies in the thinking and action of the working class movement and the magnetic force it has to attract allies, that is really responsible for their inability to advance a strategy capable of moving the masses into action and struggle, the "*sine qua non*" of any revolutionary development.

The British working class challenged the British state and were preparing for the first time a political General Strike because their conception of democracy and the abuse by the ruling class of Parliament was much more basic and sophisticated than Bill Warren gives them credit for. They were not taken in by the argument that "the law must be obeyed". They were quite capable of distinguishing between the various categories of laws.

The right to organise into free trade unions and to strike is, in their eyes, a basic democratic right won in struggle. The abuse of Parliament to deprive them of it moved them into action on an unpre-

cedented scale, involving tens of thousands who are far from convinced Socialists. In the course of this struggle on a *democratic* issue, many have learned important political lessons, including the nature of the State. A strategy that leads to that sort of involvement of masses of workers and the support for them by considerable strata of the non-proletariat, far from being reformist is the very essence of a revolutionary strategy. This was the strategy advocated by our Party, to a considerable extent brought to fruition by Party activists and is at the very heart of the strategy envisaged by the BRS.

Parliament is the institution of representative government historically developed in this country. At various times in our history it has been used as an instrument of class power on behalf of the particular ruling class. It is our intention that it should be used as the instrument of power of the working class and its allies in a Socialist Britain. It is unique in world institutions in that in theory it is all-powerful, ruling over the judiciary and the executive. Of course its powers can be eroded to suit the purposes of the ruling class.

The Soviets were elected organs and the first elected Soviets had a social democratic majority—only when their composition changed by new elections did they become the revolutionary instrument that changed society in Russia. There's no basic law except the vigilance of the people that excludes absolutely the erosion of power of Soviets or any other institution drawn up in the course of a revolutionary transformation of society.

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